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PEREGRINE BUNCE;

SETTLED AT LAST.

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A NOVEL

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"THE PARSON'S DAUGHTER," &c.

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PEREGRINE BUNCE;

OR,

SETTLED AT LAST.

CHAPTER I.

If the reader in the plenitude of his good-nature and imaginativeness will fancy himself in a remarkably snug, well-warmed, thick-carpeted, red damask-curtained room, which would have been square had not one of its corners been cut off, or rather, filled up, in order to afford space for an ample fire-place surmounted by a well-carved oaken chimney-piece, in which fire-place a grate fully stored with flaming coals topped by a brisk, dry, crackling log, gave out its heat and light; he will find himself (although invisible to them) in the society of two gentle-

men—either, a worthy in his way, as he may perhaps hereafter discover—but as opposite in character and attributes as he will see them in position, *vis-à-vis*, or rather toe to toe, on the hearth-rug; before which stands a table, whereon, sparkling like diamonds and rubies by the fire's light, appear divers and sundry bottles and glasses, in different degrees of fulness and emptiness, towering like the domes and minarets of a Mohammedan city over heaps of walnut-shells which had "discharged their cargoes," and piles of grapes and pears, and other fruits, affording ample and concurring evidence that the season of the year in which our story opens was autumn.

The men, social and sociable as they were, exhibited, as has been already said, a striking contrast to each other: the one an old uncle, sarcastic, blunt, odd, generally considered shrewd, and universally voted disagreeable; the other, a young nephew whose chance of being his uncle's heir mainly depended, as he and

everybody else thought, upon his continuous and universal agreement in the views of his Mentor and present companion. The young one was accounted exceedingly cunning, what servants and retainers call "uncommon sharp,"—"not to be had,"—"up to every thing,"—terms of laudation which those who bestow them, perfectly appreciate, but of which, even if they had reached his ear, the uncle with whom the reader finds him *tête-à-tête*, would have been about the last man in the world to admit the justice or truth.

"Peregrine," said the old gentleman to the young one, "you are a fool."

"Thank you," said Peregrine.

"Ah," replied his uncle, "that's nonsense —why do you thank me for calling you a fool?—it's an answer as bad as a *tu quoque*."

"I'm sure I didn't mean *that*," said Peregrine.

"When I say you are a fool, Peregrine," continued the old gentleman, "I do not mean that you are a fool in regard of the world; the world

—as everybody calls the fifty people whom he happens to know personally—thinks you a exceedly clever fellow—I don't; but no matter for that; no man is a prophet in his own country—still if there *are* people who puff, and praise, and toady you, still I say you are a fool—to yourself. Why don't you marry?"

"Why, sir," said Peregrine, "I don't see how in my circumstances the thing is possible."

"— Pooh, pooh, don't tell me," interrupted the impatient old gentleman;—"as Buonaparte said, there is no such word as 'impossible' in *my* dictionary."

"I can't," said Peregrine, "make up my mind to settle."

"Oh, it's your mind, is it?" said the uncle with an exceedingly arch look, and an application of the forefinger of his white right hand to the side of his

"Nose, nose, jolly red nose."

"Oh, it's your mind, that's all—well then, never mind your mind; that will cause you no great

trouble, Peregrine,—you *have* a head, and so has a pin, but by Jove, if you wait till you have made up a mind out of the materials for mind-making that Providence has assigned *you*, you will never marry or do any thing else."

"Ah, sir," said Peregrine, "that's just the way—you think worse of me, than I think of myself—and I assure you that is saying a great deal."

"I think nothing about you," said the uncle, "except for your good—you know my principle—you know what I have always said—get a wife, Peregrine—you have a small patrimony—you have an uncle well off, *ecce signum*"—(saying which the old gentleman tossed off a finely proportioned glass of claret)—"why not make yourself at once comfortable and respectable? I don't want you to throw yourself away upon a mere nobody—a thing, with no more pence than petticoats; no—look out—look about—or, as they periodically bawl out at one of my clubs, look round"—see—choose—select, and pitch upon some nice amiable creature, who recipro-

cates your affections, and then make yourself a home—a fireside; don't you see what I mean?"

"Yes, sir," said Peregrine; "I see here at this moment a fireside and a very comfortable one, but still you preach not as you practise—*you* are not married."

"Me!" said the uncle,—"no, as the old joke says, I am like the finger-post, I point the road I cannot go—I am too old; when I was young, I was too poor, that's it, Peregrine; but you have money to a certain extent. I'm told everywhere but here, you are a deucedly entertaining fellow—eh?—when you come to me, as the old joke goes, 'you hang your fiddle up with your hat in the hall.'"

"Sir," said Peregrine, "I am not conscious of any difference in my conduct or conversation when I am here or anywhere else."

"I believe you," said the uncle; "cheerfulness, mirth, and what is called conviviality, to be truly agreeable, must grow out of the circumstances of the moment. Quite unconscious

of the cause when in a give-and-take and appreciating society, you find your spirits rise, your heart warm, your mind—if you have one—expand, and your tongue begin to wag; but with me, *tête-à-tête*, how should you be excited, your talent be roused, your imagination brightened? premising, as I before said, that you have any: a man may as well try to be witty or merry, on compulsion, as to be either without a seasonable provocation; I dare say, Peregrine, you *are* a very funny fellow when you like."

The words "funny fellow" did by no means assort with the ideas which Mr. Peregrine Bunce entertained of himself, and he could not help at the moment wishing that his uncle had only been at divers and sundry parties wherein Peregrine had been encircled by listening ladies, anxious to catch a *bon-mot*, or a *jeu-d'esprit* from his lips.—Funny fellow, indeed!

"I am not aware of any peculiar absurdity in my conduct," said Peregrine; "I am in what you call the give-and-take line, play my part in

society, and am not particularly remarkable for making myself ridiculous."

"*No,*" said *Oliver Bunce*, (so was the uncle called,)—"no—I dare say not particularly—but when a bungler turns joker, it is something like the 'jackass playing lapdog,' as the old fable has it."

"But, sir," said Peregrine, "what is the immediate object—the particularly urgent reason, which induces you to press a matrimonial undertaking at this particular moment?"

"I have no particular individual to point out, if you mean that," said Oliver, "but time wears on, and man wears out, and if you put off the experiment of popping the question to somebody much longer, it may fail;—it *was* so with me—dilly dally—shilly shally—until, when I was in a position to act, I was certain to be refused; so I gave it up, and here I am."

"Well, and, my dear uncle," said Peregrine, "I can't well imagine any man more comfortably planted."

"You are wrong, Peregrine," said the uncle. "Without a woman who loves and esteems you, and whom you esteem and love, life is a blank—home a desert. I drink my wine, I crack my nuts, and now and then my jokes; but when I come back from any journey of business or pleasure, who meets me and greets me at the door?—Servants who care no more for me than they did for their last master, nor than they will for their next. There's no welcome, no solicitude, no joy; then, if I'm ill, whom have I to pity me, or tend me?—If I am pleased, whom have I to share my pleasure?—If I am vexed, whom have I to condole with me?—No, no; marry, Peregrine,—marry, if you are wise."

"But," said Peregrine, "there is in a bachelor's life an independence arising from—"

"From having nothing to depend upon, as the old joke goes," said Oliver. "Just, see how a bachelor is treated. If he goes to a country-house, he is poked into a little band-box of a bed-room, with a smoky chimney, or perhaps no

chimney at all—what does it matter? he's a bachelor; hoisted outside of a carriage on a wet night; sent to hunt for shawls and cloaks after a ball; and bound to stand up in a supper-room, fetching and carrying for some woman for whom he don't care a fig—because he is a bachelor. Psha! a portmanteau leads a better life."

"I admit the principle," said Peregrine, "but mine is a question as to time."

"So is mine," said Oliver. "Every day brings me nearer my grave, by four-and-twenty hours. I'm getting on—going down the hill fast—and I should like to see you settled before I leave the world; so think about it."

Now, to be candid with the reader, Peregrine *had* thought about it; but Peregrine, as he fancied, and indeed his friends believed, was blessed with that very extraordinary natural gift, "an old head upon young shoulders;" and although he was a great admirer of beauty and

accomplishments, he had an eye to the main chance, and relished no part of his uncle's anti-Malthusian lecture more than that in which he expressed his anxiety that he should not, as Mrs. Peachum says, or rather sings,

"Throw himself away."

Peregrine had—as every man has—certain peculiarities in his taste touching female attractions, which affected the character and qualities of the lady more immediately and particularly than her abilities or education.—Simplicity of manner, mildness, and modesty of behaviour, were the winning points in his estimation; the shrinking diffidence which heaves the tucker and tints the pallid cheek with "roseate hue," was in his estimation the *acmé* of perfection; while he recoiled from the gay and lively conduct and conversation of the finished belle or well-read blue.

After the dialogue, however, which we have just quoted, Peregrine, seeing much reason in his uncle's solicitude for his establishment, be-

gan to think seriously of the cold-pudding system which was to settle his love, and resolved accordingly to look about him without further delay. Nor indeed did he permit the *sederunt* of the evening in question to break up without promising his most respectable relation, that no time should be lost in commencing operations—bearing always in his memory that he was to do nothing rash, but, in his marriage, to make a match as well as a pair.

CHAPTER II.

WHAT the respectable Mr. Oliver Bunce has said about being witty on compulsion, holds good as regards matrimonial speculations. No man can be in love at the word of command—nor woman neither. Indeed the compulsory order serves as an extinguisher even to a growing flame; and as to exciting the smallest spark of what an Irish gentleman might call the *tinder* passion, by what Oliver Bunce would, "as the old joke says," call the approach of a "match," the thing is impossible; and although after the evening's discussion, and the forcible manner in which old Noll had put the necessity for a speedy determination, it seemed almost an

imposed duty, the difficulty resolved itself back again into the old "impossibility" because, as it appeared, no opportunity occurred for the "forwardation". (which appears quite as good an English word as the "backwardation" of the Stock Exchange) of Peregrine's project.

The reader, however, is not to suppose that Peregrine had always been so dilatory in the particular line to which his excellent and exemplary uncle wished particularly to draw his attention upon this special occasion; on the contrary, Peregrine's head was unquestionably distinguished under the *Lampedo* system of the great Professor Deville, as being very much inflicted with huge bumps of amativeness, which might have been mistaken by the unskilful in such mysteries for wens; and perhaps it may hereafter appear that the phrenologists (as they call themselves) even in his case would have found their calculations more correct than they did when they gave the head of a man who had murdered his wife and five children, a decided character for

mildness and humanity, because he did not consummate his atrocities by butchering the sixth baby in the cradle; or gravely lectured upon a cast sent them from Norfolk, professing to have been taken from a respectable gentleman's skull at Berghapton, in that county, but which, in point of fact, was derived from an oddly shaped turnip dug up in one of his fields.

Peregrine, mild as he appeared in the three-cornered parlour, was, or rather *had* been, a gay deceiver; and therefore was, as we have already seen, anxious to do precisely what uncle Noll advised; but the difficulty was, to "get the steam up", at the required moment, and to fall in love *impromptu*. It was not for want of susceptibility, poor fellow; for there was a story upon record, in his own private annals, which fully corroborated the power of his sensibility, and which somehow had entangled him in an affair—no one exactly knew the extent or nature of its obligations—with a young lady whose name never passed his lips, but who unques-

tionably had somehow acquired a strong, if not permanent, claim upon his gratitude and affection—This was Peregrine's mystery; but the habit of not caring for it, had rendered him callous, and, after the lively provocation of his uncle, he was perfectly ready for a new start.

Every county in England has its peculiar families, exactly as the aborigines of later discovered countries have their tribes. The Grimgrogs of Cheshire know no more of the Appleswags of Somersetshire, than the Quoskębuts of Patarapoo do of the Illimangungeries of Citamatam; but there is always a county chain, and if any one family happens not to be a link in it, there is an end of every thing. Twenty, nay thirty miles, are traversed through bad roads and dark nights to uphold this county compact, especially if there happens to be a bolt of aristocracy in the concatenation; and even hating one another cordially, the families meet at all convenient or inconvenient opportunities, to maintain a bond of union against the invasion of foreign intruders.

Peregrine, who had quite got over his *affaire de cœur*—how, let the scandal mongers settle amongst themselves,—thought—considered—reflected—calculated and recalculated, as to where he could begin his matrimonial campaign; although it would be doing Peregrine no very great injustice to say, that he thought that to begin, was to achieve. He was quite of the "*Veni, vidi, vici*" school, as regarded the "young women;" into which impudent assumption he certainly had been practically flattered by at least the one "unfortunate" young lady whom, under some strange circumstances, he had left to her fate—

Casting about him, he beheld in his half-sleeping vision the Botherleys of Doodlebow, the Gawkeys of Straddledale, the Snigglebottoms of Slugmere—all of the right order of people, magnates, and in their sphere and degree jealous of their rights and tetchy about precedence as the wife of a member of council at Calcutta, where, by the way, the imaginary advantages of

temporary and unreal rank are more tenaciously upheld than in the court of a legitimate sovereign, in which, the place is genuine and permanent; but still he could not settle, or rather could not conclude, as to where he was to begin to "hover;" for Peregrine would scarcely prize a heart that another could easily win. The fact is, Peregrine had notions, probably peculiar to himself, but he knew at a glance what, as regarded the fairer portion of society, was good and amiable; he was strongly and devotionally affected towards softness, sweetness, and simplicity—one hoydenish trick, one misplaced giggle, one questionable observation partaking of a *double entente*, would flutter all the loves in his dovecote of a heart, and leave him gazing on the beautiful object of his affections with a remorseful feeling of regret, such as one might suppose the director of a fire-office to cast upon the ruins of a splendid and deeply-insured building, the morning after it had been burned down.

However, uncle Noll was to be obeyed, and

Peregrine resolved to make a visit to an exceedingly nice family of whom he knew but little as yet—but which consisted of a father, mother, and two daughters—that they were co-heiresses there was no question—that they were quite pretty enough to play their parts in the world, no doubt; and the only difficulty Peregrine felt at setting to work upon the heart of one of them, was the choice—whether Margaret or Dorothea should be the victim. Dorothea being dark—Margaret being fair—both apparently good-natured, and, as he thought, likely to suit his taste and principles.

At breakfast the aspirant hinted to his uncle that perhaps the Mintons would be agreeable acquaintances to make. Oliver understood in a moment what his prudent nephew meant, and rejoiced excessively to find him so ready and willing to follow the advice which he had proffered the night before.

"Very nice people, indeed, Peregrine," said Oliver, "very—I have seen them at church—

could scarcely keep my eyes off of them—as the old joke goes, could not listen to the divine, for looking at the divinity. The dark one is my beauty, eh?—coal-black eyes—coal-black hair—skin like snow—eh?"

"They are both handsome," said Peregrine, "either in her way. But beauty is not my aim or object."

"No, no," said Noll; "'handsome is as handsome does,' says one old story; and 'not what is she? but what has she?' says another. Eh—you dog—I'll trust you—long-headed, clear-sighted, though you *have* no mind—you know what's what, as the joke goes, and I know that these girls have five-and-twenty thousand pounds apiece, down—pity you can't marry both—eh? Bigamy and polygamy—not the fashion here—do it in Turkey—so did Solomon—very odd—never could imagine either the principle or the practice—what?"

"If I could once fancy myself beloved by one charming, dear, ingenuous woman," said Pere-

grine, "I should be the happiest of men; and really the view you gave me by anticipation, last night, of the comforts of a connubial life has made me most anxious to settle."

"With all your property in a ring-fence, as the old joke goes," said Oliver. "The ring the emblem of love which has no end—eh? Peregrine—bad joke t'other side of one's mouth—for *that* which has no end has no beginning. What—"

"I am no advocate for love at first sight," said Peregrine. "I quite discard the 'full-grown Adam' school of affection—my object would be to study the mind and qualities of the fair creature to whom I devoted myself, and to trace in her performance of the duties of a daughter and sister, the blissful anticipation of her future conduct as a wife."

"Right, Peregrine, right," said Noll; "there's nothing like seeing them at home—eh?—all in the rough, as I say, about the domestic duties and household occupations. I don't mean pie-

making and pudding-making, when, as used to be the case some half century ago, Angelina Sophia would greet you with the paste sticking round her finger-nails.

"I quite sympathize with you, sir," said Peregrine, "and having turned the matter over in my mind, and mentioned my ideas on the subject to you, I shall go and make a visit to the Mintons to-day."

"Do, do," said Noll, "and give my best compliments to them. I don't know much of them, but the little I know, I like: he was a merchant—rich and well to do—so much I *do* know; tell them how happy I shall be, if they like bachelors' fare, to see them here—make up a party for them. What!—do, do—and success attend you—but the black-eyed one is the one to take—rely upon that!"

"I prefer a blonde to a brunette," said Peregrine.

"I don't exactly know them by those fine names," said the uncle, "but the fair ones are

all sly—quiet and sly—eh? don't you see?—and so uncommon—eh? Bless their little hearts, black, brown, or whatever colour they may be, they are all charming: tell them to come—and I'll make them welcome."

The contrast—or rather the curious mystification which produced that which appeared a contrast—between Peregrine and his uncle was very striking. Oliver Bunce had a notion that Peregrine was—as to a certain extent he really was—exceedingly *shy*, and would never make his way with the "woman creatures;" whereas Peregrine's shyness was by no means unprepossessing, inasmuch as it passed for that, which goes far to win a well-bred woman; a respectful deference which, when he once felt that he liked and esteemed those with whom he was living, wore off—the chilling mist in which at the outset he appeared to be enveloped was dissipated as he warmed in society; while his excessive devotion to what he was pleased to call "the fair sex," was never in the slightest degree diminished by

his own secret good opinion of himself in the art of gaining their hearts and affections. Oliver, on the other hand, who talks of all his worldly happiness as past, as mere matter of history, and a theme of perpetual retrospection and regret, was, in point of fact, infinitely more sprightly in little affairs of gallantry, than his nephew, who, at *his* age, regarded his uncle in his gout, as a talkative old gentleman, with one foot in a flannel stocking, and the other in the grave.

CHAPTER III.

Now, of these Mintons the reader ought to know something before Peregrine's visit: Minton was, as old Noll has told us, a retired merchant from London, and although certainly not

"— a native, and to the manor born,"

a man exceedingly respected and esteemed in his very genteel retreat. He was in the commission of the peace, and had been strongly urged by his wife and daughters, ever since the uniform of the deputy lieutenants was decorated, adorned, and illustrated with silver epaulettes, to endeavour to procure that most honourable office.

Minton cared not for epaulettes,—being a justice was quite enough for him, and for all his acquaintance; for the whole of his after-dinner conversation was made up of a running report of the proceedings of the tribunal of which he was one of the judges, and to whom, day by day, the rights and liberties of the subject are being gradually confided, by the agreeable and convenient process of abolishing, or at least superseding, that which in less liberal days than ours has always been reckoned the palladium of the constitution,—the trial by jury.

Anybody who heard Mr. Minton converse judicially, and lay down the law according to his own particular individual notion, in his own house, where nobody could with decency stop his oratory, might have easily appreciated the advantages derivable from the decision of one such man as affecting the liberty of the subject, not to speak of tread-milling, private-whipping, and the silent-system, in preference to the impartial judgment of twelve ordinary men,

all unbiassed and unprejudiced with regard to the criminal or his offence; the Solon of the bench under the new system being perhaps at once the accuser, the judge, the sentencer, and by deputy the executioner.

Legislation probably is to follow the "go-ahead" principle, universally adopted in all other matters, and justice to be administered as travelling is performed on rail-roads,—upon which innocent men, women, and children are killed, maimed, and mutilated day after day, although, as the reports tell us, "no blame whatever can be attributed to anybody concerned in the establishment."

Minton was a powerful, pock-frecken man, with a loud harsh voice, and who, to borrow a couplet from old Oliver Bunce's diary,—

> "Looked like a crumpet,
> And spoke like a trumpet:"

he was dictatorial and noisy, but exceedingly good-natured, made a point of being unquestionably

well-versed in parish matters, of course attended church regularly, and read the responses louder than the clerk; and the Miss Mintons having conscientiously taught the little girls and boys of the village schools to sing gloriously out of tune, Minton, for the sake of their reputation, used to (what he called) lead them in the psalms, standing erect in his pew, with his great eyes fixed upon the quivering quavering children in the gallery, giving the time with his uplifted hand more energetically than ever did Sir George Smart himself, with the baton of conductor, which he so deservedly received from his professional brethren.

Service over, Minton and his daughters took their stand in the church-yard; everybody came fresh from their piety, imbued, as it is to be hoped, with all the feelings which the service and the sermon had inspired, bobbing and curtseying round him, who standing bolt upright, maypole-wise, condescended to give every delicate worshipper of his merits and virtues

who approached, a friendly shake of the hand, the palm of which was like oak plank and the fingers like nut-crackers.

And then to hear him make his inquiries, in a stentorian voice, of the different sufferers in the neighbourhood, "it would have melted a heart of stone."—"Dawes, you got that soup and the flannel Mrs. Minton sent you?"

"Yes, sir."

"How's your wife?"

"Very bad indeed, sir, thank you."

"I've desired Dr. Pipps to call on her to-morrow."

"Thank you, sir," says the man.

"Jenkins, is your girl's leg better?"

"Yes, sir," says Jenkins, "obliged to you, sir."

"Did Mrs. Minton's plaster do it good?" says Minton.

"I don't know, sir," says Jenkins.

And so went on this trumpeting for at least half an hour, to the exaltation of Mr. Minton's

piety and charity; and the virtue and excellence of Mrs. Minton and the two co-heiresses were consequently very popular, excepting only amongst the poor people so called up and catechised, who seemed to have a shrewder guess at the cause of all these ostentatious displays, than the neighbours, who not having any need of the benevolence of the Minton family, did not feel themselves outraged by the display of the disposition of a gentleman who certainly was not one of those who

"Do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame."

Mrs. Minton was an invalid of the first water. What she had been—I do not mean to disparage the excellence of her moral character, and therefore I had better say whom she had been—was not altogether ascertainable; but there could be no doubt that the course of her education had brought her to a state in which, as far as concerned her conversation, "the least said was soonest mended." In fact, her despe-

rate, continued, and never-intermitted indisposition, arose from the absolute impossibility of her "carrying on," as the sailors say, "in society."

Minton, who was exceedingly high and mighty in all his proceedings, erected into importance, as he was, on a substantial pedestal of money-bags, could not endure the risk of any of his wife's mistakes and blunders, and would, I believe, with all his public piety and domestic excellence, have felt not exceedingly ill-pleased if any good-natured friend would have smothered his better half.

This sounds harsh—perhaps his historian may err; but the truth to which we can most unquestionably attain is, that he married at a period of his career when canvas sleeves and an apron formed the leading characteristics of his official costume, and when, as it was generally believed, he diverted himself in his leisure moments by carrying out parcels, varying that wholesome

exercise by occasionally wheeling a well-loaded truck through the streets of his native city.

Faithful and affectionate she had been to him through their lives, the early hardships of which she had shared with him, and mitigated by a care and industry which rivalled those of Mrs. Pepys, who burnt her hand in broiling the leg of a turkey for the future Secretary of the Admiralty, and to whom her excellent husband, if his original diary may be trusted, continued grateful to the very last, notwithstanding the blandishments of Mrs. Mercer, and the attractions of my Lady Castlemaine.

Minton's affections had not been estranged from his wife by any other or newer object,—he was not calculated for estrangement of that kind; of taste or sentiment he did not possess so much as one of his own coach-horses, and besides, like Pepys, he treasured up all her early anxiety and activity for her advantage in his outset,—but nevertheless all his natural feelings and

just recollections were overlaid and stifled by the obstacles which he thought and felt that her homeliness of manner, and inelegance of language, interposed to the unrestricted association of himself and his daughters with the class of society in which it was his object to "move," as the phrase goes.

Now—truth to be told—Mrs. Minton was to a certain extent conscious of her own imperfections; and the gradations of refinement in the family have often been a subject for remark and amusement amongst those who had "the pleasure of their acquaintance." In going to a party, so long as Mrs. Minton insisted upon being well enough to go—with the eldest girl—before the *blonde* was out—Mr. Minton would say to Mrs. Minton, "Now, my dear love, do mind what you are about to-night; don't come out with any of your nonsense." Mrs. Minton received the admonition kindly; and then a consent-giving silence followed, and Minton glorified in his triumph.

"And, dear papa," said Dorothea, a minute

or two after, "do mind and don't swear so —it is so vulgar in company."

Minton made a sort of croaking, cackling noise, assenting to the caution of his highly accomplished daughter, but not without thinking how rapidly the youthful *aspirantes* rise on the ladder which their careful parents have placed for them, or perhaps of the hen who, having hatched the ducklings, sees them swim easily, actively, and happily, in an element on which the mother of the brood dare not herself venture.

Mrs. Minton, during the "invalidism" into which her husband, aided by a friendly and accommodating physician, had persuaded her, had been recommended the use of a now almost exploded consolation, in the shape of camphorated julep, which, in order to prevent any unpleasant results, was ordinarily exhibited coevally and contemporaneously with cold brandy-and-water, probably the most dangerous imaginable adjunct to any thing in the world.

Minton, who, as we have already shown,

was no Chesterfield himself, had mixed sufficiently with the world in its various phases, to make him, with a little caution, passable enough as a retired merchant;—with an independent fortune and a comfortable establishment, very little is wanting to make the world bear with more than patience the quaintnesses and oddities of their possessor, by whom they have been acquired;—his habitual solecisms and unconquerable vulgarities pass with his well-pleased guests for so many *piquant* drolleries or nicely disguised playfulnesses; while his curious opinions and avowals, wholly at variance with *bienséance* or popular taste, are treated as the amusing eccentricities of an extremely shrewd and clever man.

Mrs. Minton's performances in the same line were however too broad, too palpable, and too obvious, to enable the ladies of the neighbourhood—or of the county, as *he* would have said—and with whom it was his great object to associate, to give her, as judges of female society, the

benefit of any doubt favourable to the essentiality of her coarseness; the consequence was, as the scandal of the neighbourhood went, that as Mrs. Minton's addiction to the camphor julep and its concomitant habitually increased, and when her daughters grew up and became old enough to do the honours, Mr. Minton always contrived, when any party was expected, to administer to his better—or as the ungrateful merchant would perhaps have said, his bitter—half, on the preceding evening, or sometimes at luncheon on the day itself, a cheering cordial tonic—to her irresistible—compounded after his prescription and her taste, of certain liquors which, however innocuous in their ulterior results, were of a nature to produce a temporary indisposition, sufficiently important to confine her to her room during the period of the proposed festivity, and to render her—in her own words, thus unconsciously delivered as an excuse for her non-appearance—"a wretched invalid; scarce able to stand, and not fit to be seen."

It was said, I recollect, at the time, that Mr. Minton justified this apparently unfeeling and barbarous course of proceeding upon two grounds: first, upon his anxiety to maintain the respectability of his family; and secondly, because if he had not by a *douce violence* induced his lady to make herself just sufficiently unwell to save his reputation, she would at and after dinner have not only ruined it, but have made herself much worse into the bargain.

Harsh, hard, and uncouth, as Mr. Minton was, his was the family on which Peregrine first meant to make his hawk-like descent, in order to pounce upon, and carry off, one of his sweet chickens, who, by the way, were not what the world considers exactly in a chickenary light. His choice was an odd one, but he had heard that the girls were not quite comfortable at home, or, if they were, that they had been comfortable there as long as they wished to be; and, therefore, coupling the proximity of their residence to that of his uncle, with something of a

knowledge of their little private histories, he fancied he could, by making one of them happy, secure happiness to himself, with, perhaps, five-and-twenty or thirty thousand pounds into the bargain.

There is something in a consciousness of one's intentions and designs, which somehow mars a man's exertions; and the feeling that Peregrine came into the family with affection and love prepense and aforethought, paralysed his efforts to make himself as amiable or *aimable* as usual; indeed, one of the great points of his embarrassment was the decision between the claims of the young ladies to his particular attentions.

It was generally understood that their fortunes were the same; the difference in their ages was fourteen months. Dorothy, as we have already said, was dark—Margaret was fair. Dorothy was lively and laughing—Margaret serious and sentimental. Dorothy said every thing she thought, and without waiting for the best

words to express herself—Margaret spoke little, and her soft downcast blue-grey eyes seemed to court the encouragement which her boisterous sister's sparkling black ones appeared to give.

In the days of homeliness when these fair creatures were christened, the one was ordinarily called Dolly, and the other Peggy; but as fortune smiled, and the paternal wealth increased, the coarseness of these appellations gave way to more euphonic sounds, and the elder young lady became "Dory," while her sister was "Margy." They were, dear things, constantly and perpetually engaged in a sort of playful warfare, which, even if they did not intend it should be so, was remarkably agreeable to their acquaintance, especially to the "he-creatures," as Dory called them. They snubbed each other for faults and follies which perhaps nobody else would have found out, or even thought about, if they had not in the plenitude of their playfulness attracted the attention of the circle to them. Thus, Dory would call Margy a prude, and a

"pernickity" thing, doomed and destined to die an old maid; while Margy would proclaim her sister a flirt, and a coquet,—none of which, however true in point of fact, they ever meant to be seriously believed.

Margy, however, was the object of Peregrine's solicitude, as soon as he had obtained sufficient footing in the family to cast about in sober earnestness for a help-meet: pale, delicate, diffident, and seemingly sorrowful, she excited something like pity, and that pity something "much akin to" love, by the sweet gentleness with which she bore so mildly and meekly the attacks of her volatile voluble sister. And then she was so good—"pretension to piety is odious," thought Peregrine, "but to see this humble-hearted fair creature betake herself silently, alone, and unostentatiously, to the infant schools, to the establishment of which she has herself largely contributed, is delightful." There were no gilt letters emblazoned on panels in front of the church gallery, announcing that she had subscribed so much towards

beautifying the edifice, by whitewashing its venerable walls, and gilding and painting the beautiful relics of antiquity, whose very dirt gave them additional value. No county paper proclaimed that Miss Margaret Minton had added largely to the funds of its benevolent and philanthropic institution. No—she was, in fact, an exceedingly interesting and attaching girl—she saw, moreover, that Peregrine thought so; indeed, as his objects were serious, and his intentions real, he took no very great trouble to conceal the real feelings which she had excited—what *she* thought, of course remains to be developed. To a being like Margaret Minton, time was essentially necessary for the consideration of the character and qualities of a man whose object in perpetually visiting at the house, coupled with what the cocknies call "the delicate attentions" which he paid her, could scarcely be mistaken.

Peregrine was of the chamelion order of human beings: without much character of his own, but with the organ of self-preservation

strongly developed, he was not an unskilful professor of the art of accommodating himself to the views, manners, habits, and opinions of those with whom he associated, and whose sympathies it was his object to engage: he took the colour of surrounding objects most readily, and fell so completely into Margaret's system of early education and pious training-up, that he would beg to be permitted to escort her to the schools, in preference to going on any gayer pursuit which might be proposed by Minton or his elder daughter.

Margaret occasionally permitted this display of sanctimonious gallantry to a certain extent—the door of the school-house, however, was the barrier; there she parted from her friend—she feared he was not yet good enough to pass the threshold, and entreated him to leave her to the performance of those duties which religion and conviction had induced her to impose upon herself.

"What a wife she will make!" said Peregrine;

"how amiable, how gentle, and how good! I wish —I wish—devoutly wish that I could with decency ascertain what her fortune really *is*. How delightful it would be to encourage and strengthen her in these habits and principles! Common report is not always to be relied upon—scarcely ever—if she *have* five-and-twenty thousand pounds, what could I do better?—uncle Noll will be delighted, and all will go well. I shall not only be a richer but a better man than I ever hoped or expected to be."

And so he prudently and almost piously soliloquised,—his thoughts nearly equally divided, according to his worthy uncle's apophthegm, in the contemplation and consideration of what she was, and what she had.

CHAPTER IV.

"WELL now, Margy," said the lively Dory to her tender sister, "what do you really think of him?"

"Him?" asked Margy, scarcely lifting her eyes from her work—for she was an indefatigable constructor of what Oliver Bunce would have called he-mises and she-mises for the rising generation—"what do you mean by *him*, dear Dory?"

"What should I mean?" replied the sparkling sister; "why, by *him* I mean your devoted swain, Peregrine."

"Swain!" echoed Margy,—"I really have not the smallest idea what you mean."

"Poor innocent!" said Miss Minton; "this is always the way with you quiet, unassuming, exceedingly good young ladies; why, you know Margy as well that he is over head and ears in love with you, as you know—"

"That Captain O'Larrup is mad for you," interrupted Margy.

"Well, what then?" said Dory; "I know he is in love with me, and I like it; it is exceedingly agreeable to be loved, and he is quite a man after my heart—tall, good-looking and good-natured, laughs louder than papa, tells wonderful stories about himself, and plays upon the key-bugle like an angel."

"My dear Dory," said Margy, with a look of immeasurable horror, "how you permit yourself to talk!—praise the Captain, if you like,—praise his person and his accomplishments, but the idea of playing upon the key-bugle like an angel!"

"Well, well," said Dory; "there, I know that was wrong, and I won't say it again—only he plays on it beautifully. I don't mean any harm

by what I say; my notion is, and I speak for myself, that every woman has in her head a thousand odd whims and droll fancies; and if she keep them all to herself, they may turn to mischief, but if she lets a few of them out, off-hand as they occur, it is much better for her in the end. I look upon my tongue as a sort of safety-valve to my mind, and use it accordingly."

"But, dearest girl," said Margy, "if you would but regulate your mind, discipline it, keep it in order, and occupy it with thoughts and considerations of a higher order and better character, you would have no occasion for any such mechanical correction."

"Don't preach, Margy," said Dory; "I know you are a most excellent person, and do a vast deal of service to our poor neighbours. As for myself, I certainly have no taste for carrying about water-gruel and looking at sore legs; so I delegate either my maid or Mr. Fleam—the very *beau ideal* of apothecaries—to minister to the wants and alleviate the sufferings of my pets: my

belief is that the poor creatures themselves like it better; nothing annoys a poor person so much as a visit from a rich one—it puts them out, worries them, disarranges them—and moreover is injurious, because half the time which a wife or a daughter might devote to attendance on the patient is taken up in scrubbing, and dusting, and washing their 'place,' as they call it, to make it look neat and tidy, and so, at a vast inconvenience to themselves, get the dear young lady's praise for cleanliness and industry."

"Upon these subjects we cannot agree," said the gentle Margaret: "such matters depend more upon feeling than taste: I do not mean to say that there is any positive gratification or amusement in visiting sick rooms or small cottages, but there is a satisfaction arising from doing a duty, which in itself produces pleasure of a much higher character than any derivable from the mere common-place gaieties of society."

"I like doing things on a greater scale," said Dory; "I like the excitement of a bazaar or a

fancy ball—I would work night and day to furnish a stall, and play off all my best airs and graces to get customers for my stock, and glory in finding myself the largest contributor to the charity. In the same way, at a fancy-ball one has gaiety mingling with goodness, and the delight of the dance is charming, enhanced by the reflection that while we are pleasing ourselves we are benefiting others."

"All wrong, Dory dear," said Margaret. "As to the delights of dancing, I cannot discuss them, because never dancing myself I do not appreciate them; but the bazaar is idle nonsense,—you buy materials of tradesmen who need no sympathy; you make them up at a vast deal of useless trouble; and you sell them, to the unquestionable injury of an honest hard-working class of our fellow-creatures, who make them much better, and exist by selling them much cheaper; and then, in order to force from the pockets of thoughtless people who have not a spark of charity in their composition, the price of the theatrical exhibition of what you call

your 'airs and graces' you assume a character, which, if it were real, would be injured and destroyed by the very trickeries which for charity's sake you think it becoming to 'play off.'"

"Well, but, my dear girl," replied Dory, "if it is to do good—"

"Ay," interrupted her sister, "you believe, I suppose, that the end justifies the means; that does not hold good in all cases, does it?"

"Why, that I don't know, dear," said Dory, "but this I *do* know, that I think the means you are taking with your pet schools here will not be justified in the end. There you go every day, stiving yourself up in a hot room full of dirty brats bawling out all the common-place sayings of life to psalm tunes, singing the most solemn words to the most vulgar airs, and rehearsing to music the ordinary tasks of eating, drinking, and washing themselves."

"The end there," said Margaret, "will surely justify the means. There I *am* in my glory—the prospect that opens to my view there is

most cheering, and I feel ten times happier within those humble white-washed walls, than in the finest saloons of our aristocratic neighbours."

"Well," answered Dory, "I confess if education is so essential to those young folks, I should content myself with engaging competent teachers, and occasionally having the pupils examined by some equally competent person, who might judge of their progress, and report upon it, but—"

"If education be essential," said Margaret, looking alarmed, "if!—why, what upon earth would they do without it?"

"Much the same, my dear," said Dory, "as they did in the times of our Edwards and Henrys, and the glorious days of your favourite, Queen Bess."

"Those were days of mental blindness," said Margaret.

"Yes, ignorance, perfect ignorance," said Dory; "poor Shakespeare, for instance, and a few more."

"Shakespeare," said Margaret; "I am speak-

ing of things far different from plays, Dory, or players; it is not for the perusal of such books that I delight in educating the children of my schools."

"Perhaps not, Margy," said the sister, "and if you could confine the children of your schools to a course of pious and moral reading, it would be all exceedingly well; but by curing what you call the mental blindness of the olden times, you are opening their eyes and their minds to a thirst after knowledge which never can be of the slightest use to them, not to speak of the insidious attacks of the traitor and the infidel."

"I think," said Margaret, "disciplined as *they* are, their minds will be proof against any such attacks."

"Well, but," said Dory, "discipline their minds as you will—teach them to read nothing but good books if you can,—having done this, who in another half century will make your shoes, or your bread, or milk your cows, or mow your grass, or till your land, or cut your corn?"

"My dear girl," said Margaret, "we waste our time in these discussions; you never will talk me out of what I think my duty—you ought to have been a papist."

"What's that noise?" said Dory, startled by a rustling amongst the trees, in which the summer-house, where they were sitting, was embosomed.

"Only *me*," said Peregrine, coming forth from his hiding-place. "I heard you arguing very learnedly, and with a certain degree of animation, and I did not like to break in upon such a discussion, so I paused and became an auditor."

"That is excessively rude, Mr. Bunce," said Dory, laughing.

"I give you my honour," said Peregrine, "if the dialogue had taken any thing of a personal character, I should have discovered myself before; as it is, I have heard only that, which it was most agreeable to hear;" saying which, he cast upon the mild, placid countenance of the

gentle Margaret, one of those looks which in the course of his small practice he had uniformly found exceedingly effective. Margy was conscious of the peculiarity of its expression, and blushed. Dory saw the proceeding, held down her face, and smiled.

There is no doubt that Mr. Peregrine Bunce was hit particularly hard by the unprepared, spontaneous, and inartificial disclosure of Margaret's goodness, made in confidence to a fond sister, without the slightest idea of display or effect. His eyes wandered not from the fair object of his admiration; and recurring to the subject of her favourite schools, he begged to be permitted to accompany her on her next visit, and to be allowed the privilege of the *entrée*, which she had hitherto denied him.

"No," said Margaret, "not yet; you not good enough, Mr. Bunce: there is something in your look and manner that induces me to believe that although you give in to my

ways, you are laughing at me in your sleeve. I require a longer noviciate from my adherents than you have yet served."

"To be thought worthy of your approbation, Miss Margaret," said Peregrine, "years of trial would be well spent."

"I think I had better go in," said Dory, "and see what o'clock it is."

"Dory, love," said Margaret, "where are you going?"

"To leave you and Mr. Bunce to your confessions, my dear," said Dory, "I am not half good enough for such exceedingly *good* society."

"Did you ever hear such a girl," said Margy, appealing to Mr. Bunce, who appeared more amiable in her eyes than he ever had before, "why are you not good enough—there is not a better creature upon earth."

"Yes, but I think I hear the captain's key-bugle," said Dory, "and as he plays lively tunes, it would not perhaps be proper to let

him come this way, to disturb your serious thoughts."

Saying which, Dory gathered up her work and ran off in the direction of the house, leaving Bunce and Margy in what might be called a delicate dilemma.

"Well," said Margy, "I must go after her, or—"

"Nay, nay," whispered Peregrine, "stop one moment; tell me—tell me seriously when may I go with you to these schools: it will be my delight and pride to aid you in the charming task of educating these interesting children; how can my hours be better passed than in uniting with you in so laudable a pursuit."

"I am delighted," said Margaret, "to hear such words from your lips, Mr. Bunce. I have, since your more frequent visits here, heard others pass them, which have grated harshly upon my ears, and pained my heart—words of levity—and, more than once, an oath—now—"

"Oh," interrupted Bunce, gazing on the fair

girl with delight, "what happiness do you confer on me by confessing an interest in my welfare! By Heavens!——"

"Mr. Bunce," interrupted (in *her* turn) Miss Minton, "another oath—and that too at the moment of my just reproval!"

"Yes," said Peregrine, "but this is an oath in seriousness—in solemn seriousness; let me but be honoured—blessed by your encouraging care, by your soothing and cheering advice, make me a participator in those feelings and principles, the avowal of which have this morning inspired me with respect and admiration—make me, in fact, worthy to be your companion, and ——"

"—— friend, Mr. Bunce," said Margaret, gently pushing away the gentleman's right hand, which was evidently on a voyage towards hers, "nothing will give me more pleasure than to conduce, in any degree however humble, to benefiting your interests, or leading your mind into a right path—"

"Angel!" muttered Peregrine.

Margaret, happily for him, did not hear the gentle exclamation.

"After all, what guide, what monitor, is equal to a pious, gentle woman?" said Peregrine.

Peregrine had, in the morning, ascertained from Mrs. Minton, with whom he had been sitting in what she called her "Boodore," and who had been largely camphorated by her spouse at luncheon-time, that the young ladies were to have thirty thousand pounds each,—an advance upon the rumoured twenty-five, an announcement that induced Peregrine to advance his pretensions in a similar ratio; to the which he was, moreover, stimulated by the free and easy manner of Captain M'Larrup, who came spanking and smacking about the house and grounds, rattling away with his key-bugle, in the most independent manner, with a sort of handkerchief-tossing air, that kept the gentleman who was anxious to be "settled," in a perpetual fever.

The return of Dory to look for her sister, and the appearance of M'Larrup in her wake,

effectually put a stop to further negociations between Peregrine and the lady at that moment; but Bunce felt that he had secured a "locus standi," that he had made a lodgment in the heart of his fair friend, and that, however pious she herself might be, and however pious she wished to make *him*, she would not quarrel, if, in the course of his probation, he did heedlessly let slip any improper or indecorous word, or if she did, he felt equally convinced that—

> "Her eyes would pardon,
> Before her tongue could chide."

So that the break-in upon and consequent break-up of the *tête-à-tête* was not so serious a grievance to Peregrine, as some people might think it. He had unbosomed himself to a certain extent—Margy had committed *her*-self in a certain degree, and when things had come to that point where sentiment transcended expression, and nothing but a practical exemplification of his feelings could have carried matters fur-

ther, our adventurous suitor felt rather relieved than distressed by the appearance of the beauty and the bugler. He was conscious that he had made what soldiers call a demonstration: the secret of his admiration of Margy was a secret (to her, at least) no longer, and the avowal of her interest in his spiritual welfare afforded him ample assurance, that the knowledge of the state of his heart, which he had imparted to her, could not be unwelcome intelligence to one so good, so pure, and so ingenuous.

If it had not been that his respect for the serious principles of his intended had moderated his animal spirits, Peregrine could have danced merrily to the air of Paddy O'Rafferty, which Captain M'Larrup was cracking away with his bugle, and which had the effect of driving the gentle Margy from her bower, and, in fact, scattering the *parti carré*.

Peregrine, as the reader from what he has heard may probably imagine, had established himself in the family, so far as to be "looked

for at dinner," whenever he chose to stay; for his mornings were always devoted to the Mintons. So, as he followed, or, one might say, if it did not sound too sociable, accompanied ("haud passibus æquis,") his charming Margy towards the house, having encountered the magisterial Minton on the lawn, the question put to him by that self-sufficient Solon was not, "Will you stay and dine, Bunce?" but "You are *not* going Bunce!" which of itself satisfactorily proved that he was expected to stop.

Those who have loved really, truly, and sincerely—loved affectionately and devotedly, and therefore diffidently, must have often felt the rapturous delight of a quiet, cordial invitation from the father or mother of the beloved object, and who (with all the lover's fond, passionate, almost mad anxiety for staying in the society of her who alone made existence happiness,) have, in giving it, smiled, or seemed to smile upon, and even encourage, at least by implication, the doubting lover's pretensions,

will probably appreciate the pleasure that Peregrine felt at the question put by Minton. Of course he hemmed, and haa'd, and boggled, and blushed, talked of his undress—his boots—and all that sort of thing, which objections, made to be overruled, were laughed at by Minton, who begged him to care nothing about his deshabille —there was no company, and he considered him one of themselves.

CHAPTER V.

FULLER says, "Some hold that when hospitality died in England, she gave her last groan among the yeomen of Kent, and still at our yeomen's tables you shall have as many joints as dishes,—no meat disguised with strange sauces; no straggling joint of a sheep in the midst of a pasture of grass, or beset with salads on every side, but more substantial food: no servitors (more nimble with their hands than the guests with their teeth) take away meat before stomachs are taken away: here you have that, which in itself is good, made better by the store of it, and best by the welcome to it."

This half-tormenting retrospect of foregone

times taken by the worthy writer, might certainly have been justly applied to Minton's establishment at the present time. A well-covered board; good wine, and plenty of it, did ample justice to the welcome with which his guests were bidden; and there were in his manner an earnestness, a warmth, and a *bonhommie* withal, which made the continuous flow of his words not so tiresome as might be expected, or the tone of his cracked voice quite so inharmonious as it would have sounded had he assumed a different style of conversation.

As we have before said, the magisterial office had been to him the object of his highest ambition. In possessing the judicial authority which the good nature of the Lord Lieutenant of his county, in the days when Lord Chancellors attended to the recommendations of those provincial vicegerents, had secured him, he believed himself a magnate of the land, upon whom and whose decisions, to use his own words, "the eyes of the whole country were;" and living,

luckily for the enjoyment of his dignity, at a considerable distance from any brother of the bench, he

"Reign'd and ruled without control,"

in his own neighbourhood. The mighty man who found "Rome bricks, and left it stone," could not have been prouder of his imperial beneficence than Squire Minton was of the advantages he had secured, and the improvements he had made to, and in, the rapidly increasing village of Twigglesford, wherein, happily and providentially for the inhabitants thereof, he had located himself.

Full of this happy delusion, the good-natured tyrant was the happiest man alive. Nothing occurred likely to be either nearly or remotely advantageous to Twigglesworth of which Minton did not take the credit. But it should be observed, that he was chiefly eloquent upon his magisterial *dicta*, and the recapitulation of all his patriotic exertions *at*—even more than *after*

—dinner, inasmuch as the servants in waiting, and the servants of their neighbouring friends, who occasionally stayed to help the establishment, were during the progress of the meal present and in attendance, occupying their hands in moving and removing, putting down and taking up, and performing all the ordinary services required of them, were, nevertheless, certain to keep their ears open to catch whatever connected with and concerning the parish fell, or rather rose ceiling-high, from the lips of Mr. Minton.

The dinner-party immediately under notice consisted of mine host and the girls, Peregrine, Captain M'Larrup, Mr. Fleam the apothecary, &c. the Rev. Slobberton Mawks the curate, one of Margy's idols, who thought smiling and swearing equally sinful, who imbibed water upon principle instead of wine—that is, in company—but who in his own dirty lodgings "took to drinking ratafia," and found the flesh willing and the spirit by no means weak.

This pale-faced puny whipster was known in

the parish by the nickname of the Ghost. The rector, a worthy excellent man, a man of station and understanding, possessed every quality requisite for the fulfilment of the duties of a thoroughly good parish-priest;—kind, benevolent, charitable, and attentive upon all occasions to the wants, spiritual or personal, of his parishioners, he inspired in the hearts and minds of all his flock a cheerful confidence in the fruits of faith and good works, and, as has been said of one of his excellent predecessors, not only pointed out the road to eternal happiness, but led the way himself.

His wife, in all that becomes the help-meet of a protestant clergyman, seconded his endeavours to secure the comforts of the parishioners, and the parishioners duly appreciated the kindness and consideration with which they were treated. Mrs. Freeman, like the reverend Doctor her husband, was constantly active in doing good—in promoting the worldly happiness of their poorer neighbours, and where-

ever she went she seemed to throw round her a gleam of happiness, which neither she nor the Doctor considered incompatible with piety or devotion.

The reverend Doctor patronized healthful exercises;—cricket, foot-ball, and quoits, on the village green or the meadows below, in their several seasons were encouraged in the evenings after labour was done, and the contending parties hospitably refreshed with provisions and good old ale,—and their wives and children were expected to join, if not in the sportive part, at least in the refreshments: every body loved the rector and his lady,—blessings followed them at their departure from, and welcomed them on their return to, the parish. Their children were trained up to piety, to virtue, and to charity, but in the full enjoyment of harmless mirth and Christian cheerfulness.

The Reverend Slobberton Mawks, the curate, was exactly the reverse of the worthy rector. Sallow in countenance; mean in appearance;

gloomy in disposition; affectedly pious and humble in company with his superiors, naturally vindictive and assuming whenever he fancied he could domineer over the poor, full of hatred of his rector, based upon the envy of his popularity: his whole object during the temporary absence of his superior was to impress the lower orders, not only with the sincerity of his piety, but to induce them, if possible, to draw from his sayings and doings inferences and conclusions unfavourable to the respected incumbent of the parish and his system and proceedings.

Music and cards he denounced in a tone—certainly not of thunder—for his voice, when holding forth,—which he professed to do extempore,—mingled in its tones the bleating of a ram and the braying of a donkey: and with uplifted eyes—eyes which in society his grovelling spirit and shuffling manner prevented his raising from the ground while standing, or from his lap when sitting, he inveighed in terms which brought tears into the watchful orbs of Miss

Margy Minton, against the enjoyment of any worldly amusement whatever. From the pulpit of the man (an attack upon whom behind his back was the whole and sole object of his curate's life) who blended in himself and family all the attributes of goodness and charity, and who enjoyed in his tranquil home a happiness and satisfaction which nature had not qualified the Rev. Slobberton Mawks ever to attempt to secure for himself, did he drivel his saintly nonsense, which would have been in matter and manner disgraceful to the tub of a conventicle.

Lovers are always jealous,—for without jealousy a lover's love cannot exist; and at first Peregrine, who had really worked himself up to think Margy not only pretty, but sufficiently amiable to make an excellent wife, felt apprehensive of the influence of this puritan curate over her, but a lengthened domestication cured him of his doubts and fears upon that point, for although Mr. Mawks made a point, whenever it was possible, of planting himself next Margy, his

views and objects partook not in the slightest degree of worldly amativeness.

Their conversation generally turned upon the expenditure of pinafores and nightcaps for the children at the schools,—the exemplary conduct of Mrs. Grout, the girls' schoolmistress, and of her excellent nephew, Joseph Grout, in the conduct of the boys' department. Having ascertained which, Peregrine resolved, whenever he could, to get on Margy's other side at table, and "improve the occasion," as Mr. Mawks would have said, by chiming in with all their praises of Mrs. Grout and her nephew, Joseph, and affect the deepest possible interest in the establishment over which the curate was daily and hourly exercising his gloomy control and authority during the absence of the family from the rectory.

Dory was too much of this world, worldly, not to see the progress of Peregrine's courtship. Gradually, and day by day, he lessened the quantity of wine which he was in the habit of

taking after dinner: oaths, which sometimes, in a moment of hilarious excitement, or in repeating an anecdote of some absent acquaintance, he accidentally might let fall, never passed his lips: he never played cards, although one of his strongest recommendations to Squire Minton, in the outset of their acquaintance, was his being an uncommon good hand at whist;—in fact, Peregrine was in earnest, and with good reason; for in person, manner, and conversation—especially in the absence of Mr. Slobberton Mawks—she was unexceptionable; although lately and since her acquaintance with the curate had increased to intimacy, there seemed, even when he was not by, something like a cloud hanging over her mind, and which at times appeared to oppress and weigh her down; nor were the boisterous spirits of Captain M'Larrup, or the loud tones of his key-bugle, likely to soothe or assuage a grief which appeared to Peregrine to have its origin in her mind, and a feeling of self-unworthiness and apprehension.

But to return to the dinner-parlour. Fleam the apothecary, &c. of Twigglesford, an exceedingly intelligent person, was cordially invited by Minton, who used him as a fives-player does the walls of the court, to play his balls against, and make his game; he was the guest to whom all Minton's egotistical announcements of his magisterial proceedings were addressed, and whenever the conversation flagged, or was diverted from the favourite channel, he acted as flapper to his host, and contrived most dexterously to restore and bring it back.

"Fish, dear Dory," said Minton,—"eh!—no—Margy, love—salmon—what—yes—plate—eh, Miss Margy.—Captain—eh?—what!—yes. Doctor—(he always called Fleam, Doctor)—send you some in a moment—ah—Captain, you have—yes. What I see—ay?—Mr. Mawks don't object to fish—what? caught in nets—not barbarous—eh?—impaling worms and hooking their noses—know your prejudices—have lobster-sauce, what?—which? Fleam—I have carried my point

—moved the pump—knew it could be done—took good advice, what—it has been the object of my life to carry that measure—put the pump back four feet six inches—cost me many a sleepless night—knew the right was with us—hope to cut down Watson's chimney next week—eh? What?—dreadful eyesore.—Blackstone and Burn are both on *my* side—what?—I never will rest till I have completed the improvements in Twigglesford, what?—eh?—don't you see?—glass of wine, Doctor!—sherry—madeira—eh?—what?—sherry and water, Fleam;—and as—your health—as to Bates's fence, it's a perfect botch—have it down before September—nuisance—horrible—what!—put a gate instead of a style—better for the ladies—and if—only one cannot do wonders, nor bring every great measure through, all at once—Rome for instance, as I say, was not built in a day—eh?—what?—well, of course I—know—I feel the importance of the task I have imposed on myself, and the difficulties likely to be incurred; but—I am sanguine—my heart is

fixed upon it—and all my energies shall be devoted to it—and rely upon it, I will have Hawkins's pig-sty cleared away before I have done."

It should be remarked that this monologue continued unabated, unmitigated, through the whole of dinner: strangers, out of courtesy, or perhaps in their astonishment, used to attend to it, and remark upon it now and then, here and there endeavouring to exhibit and express something like an interest in the detail, but neither his own family nor any of the *habitués* paid the slightest attention to it;—the lodger in the first floor, over a coppersmith's workshop, never hears the sound and clatter of the rattling hammers. The general-postman's bell, while exercising his arm, is a dumb-bell to him; and the miller never attends to the noise of his grinding until the tinkling at the hopper awakes him to a sense of the necessity of action.

Fleam alone was bound to listen and reply;—this and the regular purveyance of camphor

julep to Mrs. M. formed his principal occupations; and, faithful to his trust, he played his part to perfection, in consideration of Minton's liberality in the Christmas account, and his unflinching hospitality whenever he chose to partake of it.

Dory devoted herself to M'Larrup—Peregrine to Margy—Mr. Slobberton Mawks's share of the performance consisted in murmuring good advice into her left ear, while Bunce was whispering sentiment well tinctured with piety into her right one, starting with horror every now and then when the gallant Hibernian "on the opposite side of the house," thoughtlessly rapped out an expletive, which Mawks was fully satisfied would doom him to eternal perdition.

"Doctor," continued Minton, "I sent that fellow Griggs to the tread-mill—idle dog—no evidence against him as to stealing the sheep—what?—eh?—don't you see?—not a bit—but, summary jurisdiction's the thing, sir—he was a vagabond—a regular vagabond—booked him, sir,

one month—on the stairs without a landing, eh? do him a great deal of good—wanted us once to send him to enjoy the comforts of the union—good roof over his head—capital bran-soup four days in the week—hot potatoes Mondays and Thursdays, and a feast of oatmeal porridge for Sunday—the idea—able-bodied fellow—stole Mr. Muddlechop's cock turkey—know the fact—had no evidence against him—no matter for that—satisfied *myself*—gave him a month's mounting—if I could have got rid of him altogether, he should have gone—don't want the stupid old formality of juries now—eh?—what?—don't you see?—M'Larrup, some champagne—what!"

M'Larrup bowed assent, and they drank.

"I hav'n't heard any more about the bell-rope, Doctor," said the squire; "I have been reading deuced hard to ascertain the right of the Churchwardens. I know they have such special property in the furniture of the Church, that they can bring an action in their joint names for any damage it sustains; but as to the

bell-rope—eh?—what?—I cannot quite make up my mind."

"——The rope is a knotty point, I presume," said Captain M'Larrup.

"——Pray, Captain M'Larrup," said Mr. Slobberton Mawks, "let me entreat of you, sir, not to jest upon such a subject—recollect it is the bell-rope of a church, of which you are speaking, and although my personal acquaintance with you is very slight, do not be offended with me, if for your own benefit and advantage I venture to observe that such matters ought not to be liable to any conversational levity."

"By Jabus," said the Captain, "I'm perfectly aware that the rope is a mighty delicate topic of conversation in some families. I meant nothing personal, Mr. Mawks."

"Rather *parsonal* though," said Peregrine, thrown off his guard by the opportunity of making a bad joke, which the Captain's pronunciation afforded.

The squire laughed—so did the Captain—so did the Doctor—and so did Dory.

Mawks and Margy moved no muscle of their countenances. Marble or mummies could not have remained more steadily fixed than they. Peregrine's repentance followed his indiscretion as rapidly as the awful thunder succeeds the brilliant, dangerous lightning.

"I ought to apologize to *you*," whispered he to his fair neighbour, "for trifling on such a theme."

"Not to *me*," said Margy; "think of yourself, Mr. Bunce."

"Well," resumed Minton, "I shall not give it up—I'll try the question—eh, Doctor?—you know enough of me to know my firmness when embarked in a great cause—nothing can daunt me—eh?—nothing stop me—no, no—placed, as I feel I am, as the guardian of the destinies of a very considerable population, I never will flinch—what?—eh?—pass the wine. Help yourself, Mr. Mawks."

"None, sir, I thank you," said the saintling, pushing the bottles from him with a sort of reverential dismay, and a formal activity in forwarding them up the table, expressive of his desire to have nothing whatever to do with them. His action and manner seemed visibly, if not sensibly, to affect Margy, and awaken her to a consciousness of the crime she was committing, by feeling herself rather more comfortable than usual, and without having, as younger sister, any right to do so, she audibly hinted, or, as Mr. Slobberton Mawks would have said, "gave out" that it was time for them to go.

It would perhaps not be quite decorous to repeat the observation which Dory whispered to the Captain with the key-bugle, in reply to the suggestion; however, it seemed best to her to comply with it, more especially as if they did not speedily go up to "Ma," "Ma" might probably come down to them; and so, after one or two gentle hints to the Captain not to sit too long, the girls retired, Peregrine

satisfied—or rather being much dissatisfied—that he had prejudiced his cause considerably by breaking in upon the rule of seriousness which for the last two or three weeks he had adopted for his conduct towards the object of his attentions.

When the ladies left the room, the Rev. Slobberton Mawks made his exit through one of the windows which opened upon the lawn, and speedily disappeared in the gloom of the autumnal evening, which was fast deepening into night.

Even were it possible, it would not be prudent to detail the conversation which ensued. Mr. Minton took the lead, haranguing on his indefatigable exertions for the good of mankind. Upon which proclamation of his personal merits, the Captain continued now and then to break in with a short and smart Irish story, keeping Peregrine in a state of disquietude,—not because he was either unamuzed or offended by the drollery of his opposite neighbour, but for fear Margy

might overhear some of the points, and punish him with her frowns for sitting so long in such a loose and dissolute society, at the head of which was her own papa.

The fact is, that Margy, from being an exceedingly good and amiable girl, had, under the influence of Mr. Slobberton Mawks and the schoolmistress, fallen into a state of gloominess and dread of worldly criminality, which state seldom or never is fixed or stationary. Like many bodily disorders, its nature is to continue constantly progressing, either for the better or the worse; and the mind, once tainted with what can be called neither more nor less than fanaticism, becomes entirely absorbed; and unless some means are devised to restore it to its natural tone, is at last irrecoverably destroyed. Under the influence of this disease, for such it is; the nearest and dearest ties of relationship are disregarded, and the parent who has reared his child is, in some cases, an object of compassion and even contempt in the eyes of his offspring,

while, on the other hand, the child is denounced by the parent as unworthy to live and unfit to die.

When Peregrine was first introduced to the Mintons, Margy was all that a daughter and a Christian should be ; but something had occurred —what, perhaps we may live to find out—which had given a sudden shock to her feelings, curdled the kindly nature of her disposition, and, with a rapidity scarcely credible, converted the amiable, pious yet cheerful girl, into a gloomy ascetic decrier of all worldly acts, manners, and customs, and corrector-general of what she considered all the improprieties of which her father, mother, and sister, were daily and hourly guilty. Dancing was sinful—cards were certain condemnation —laughter profane—no music but that of psalms and hymns was to be tolerated—a play was perdition, and cricket on the village green destruction, inasmuch as besides the positive crime of knocking a ball about with a bat, it involved the heinous criminality of drinking fermented liquors, tending to the vice of drunkenness, which

she held to be the greatest vice of all, inasmuch as while man is under its influence, it is the cherishing parent of many others.

Peregrine's acuteness of observation did not fail to exhibit to his view clearly and distinctly the progressive descent of the young lady's spirits, the change of her principles, and increasing gloom of her mind; and having now, as he believed, made some effect in the character of lover, and having really a respect for, and almost an admiration of, her merits and disposition, as he found them in the beginning of his acquaintance, he resolved to adopt such a line of conduct, and such a tone of conversation, as should convince her of the influence which she possessed over him, and gratify her by seeing the success of her efforts to save him from perdition. With this intent and purpose he began to moralize and sentimentalize, and altogether to eschew wine, of which he was, if not immoderately, at least moderately, fond—drank nothing but water at or after dinner, contenting himself, like his worthy

compeer, Mr. Mawks, by the consolatory imbibition of stronger liquors when he was "at home and alone"—and thus determined to "go the whole hog."

"He cast himself into the saint-like mould,
Groan'd, sighed, and prayed while godliness was gain,
The loudest bagpipe of the squeaking train."

Minton himself became exceedingly uneasy at the altered condition of his daughter, and not quite well pleased to see Peregrine, as he called it, "humouring her." However, Peregrine was now permitted to accompany her to the schools. Their conversation was eternally on one subject:

"As if religion were intended
For nothing else but to be mended;
In falling out with that or this,
And finding somewhat still amiss,
More peevish, cross, and splenetic,
Than dog distract or monkey sick—
That with more care keep holyday
The wrong, than others the right way;
Compound for sins they are inclined to,
By damning those they have no mind to,
Still so perverse and opposite,
As if they worshipp'd God for spight,

The self-same thing they will abhor
One way, and long another for.
Free-will they one way disavow,
Another nothing else allow.
All piety consists therein
In them—*in other men, all sin.*"

Slobberton Mawks having seen, with infinite satisfaction, the salutary change in Bunce's manner, conduct, and conversation, gave full sanction to the spiritual association of his pious young friends, whose sympathetic wanderings, it must be confessed, did by no means tend to modify the laughter of Dory and her Captain, who, conscious of no particular sin, and feeling no particular sorrow, were, and, as it seemed, under the paternal sanction, getting on remarkably well; in fact, he was an exceedingly "agreeable rattle," a man of honour and spirit, of a good family, with a name not too euphonic, but perfectly well known and duly appreciated in the county whence he came,—with quite sufficient property, and enough of solid expectation, to justify his approaches upon the heart and hand of Miss Minton.

Oliver Bunce, "our worthy uncle," was, during the period of Peregrine's probation, exceedingly anxious to be regularly informed of the progress of his suit; but Noll was any thing but a saint, and did not quite relish the extraordinary depression of his nephew's spirits, which was but too evident; for although *sub rosa*, and in the parlour with the corner cut off, before mentioned, he took his wine, still the gloom of Mawks and the Miss had really begun to affect him; and although at first he applied himself to the system hypocritically, and with interested views, they had somehow contrived to influence, or rather terrify him into sorrow and remorse, and to a morbid dislike of all the innocent recreations to which, like other men of his standing in life and society, he had previously been affected.

"Take my advice, Peregrine," said Noll, "don't shilly-shally away your time—preaching is good in season and out of season, but if you wish really to marry the girl—pop—pop, Peregrine, pop—she'll make a good wife if you take her now: her af-

fection for you—the necessary attention to domestic duties—the new ties and interests which will occupy her will render her an excellent woman and an admirable member of society; but if she goes on in her present course, she'll be in a mad-house in a month, or, if not, in a fish-pond—pop—pop—whatever you do, pop."

"My dear uncle," said Peregrine, "it is exceedingly well for you, and exceedingly easy, to say, pop—pop—but she is not sufficiently interested in worldly matters to attend to the sort of appeal you suggest."

"Why, then," said Oliver, "you have overshot your mark—you have waited too long—you have been too pious—you have tumbled over your pony when you only hoped to get into the saddle."

"I really do not feel good enough," said Peregrine, "to attempt a proposal."

"Oh!" said Noll, "you are really serious—they *have* bitten you, have they?—why, then, and in that case, you are safe—secure—sure of her.

So now do take the advice of an older man than yourself, and save her—from herself and the popinjay puppy who is making her miserable."

"If I thought," said Peregrine, helping himself inadvertently to a well-sized glass of port wine,—"if I thought it would answer—only her sister Dory is so flippant and flighty, and looks so strangely, that I dread falling under the lash of her satire—and if I should be rejected—"

"Why should you be rejected?" said Noll. "If the girl wasn't interested about you, she wouldn't have taken such pains to do you good—the parson won't snap her up."

"Snap!" said Peregrine; "he has no notion of snapping—his only pet in this world is a fat sheep, which he keeps in his garden with a ribband tied round its neck; he eats no meat—lives upon roots—drinks nothing but water, and holds celibacy to be essential to the clerical character."

"If I was Minton," said Noll, "he never should set foot inside my doors."

"Why, to say the truth," said Peregrine, "it is not Minton's fault that he *is* so much there; he is a great stickler for the voluntary principle, and exhibits his zeal in the cause practically by inviting himself six days in the week out of the seven."

"Take my advice, Peregrine," said Oliver; "rely upon it, I am right,—let Margy, as you call her, be as full of puritanism as an egg's full of meat, the sooner she gets away from the graminivorous animal with whom she is now pastured, the better. So there, now you have my mind,—help yourself to some more wine, and settle the affair comfortably."

Peregrine certainly much improved in fortitude after his moderate indulgence in Oliver's black-strap, which was right good and ruby bright, and temporarily released from the thraldom to which he had now for some time submitted, in order to carry his point, began to think to himself that Margy *would* like to be married, and that now and then she looked

as if she would; and moreover, as if she liked *him*, and before the evening or the wine was finished, the enterprising young man resolved upon "popping," as his uncle called it, on the very first available opportunity.

It must not be concealed from the reader, especially at this critical part of the history, that of the two sisters Peregrine really admired Dory much more than Margy. Margy had succeeded in darkening his prospects, and making him to a certain degree uncomfortable,—a course of proceeding which, when he first saw her, he did not in the slightest degree anticipate. His avowed and acknowledged admiration of what he then used to call "nice, modest, quiet, retiring little things," led him in the outset really and truly to prefer Margy: but as the fog thickened and the gloom increased, and she became so exceedingly melancholy, he more than once thought seriously of edging off from her, and devoting himself to the Thalia of the family; for Peregrine, as we know, had a tolerably good

opinion of himself and of his captivating powers, and never doubted that if he had sedulously attacked the lively fair, in the first instance, Captain M'Larrup and his key-bugle would have, before this, been dismissed with scorn. Now, however, he had gone too far—four hours every day did he devote to the pinafores in the schools, taking an active part in the examinations of the young philosophers in their progress through the course of education which was to fit them so admirably for driving teams, holding ploughs, threshing wheat, cutting hedges, digging trenches, and thatching barns, when they grew to man's estate: no—his uncle was right—he ought to bring matters to a conclusion—and he would; and with this prudent resolution strong in his mind, he retired to rest, his inward man much cheered with the generous wine which he had swallowed, and his brain full of visions of peaceful bliss in a married life.

CHAPTER V.

THE eve of a "proposal," or, as Oliver Bunce calls it, "popping," cannot fail to be a very interesting, exciting, and agitating epoch in a man's career. Peregrine lay awake during the greater part of the night; his mind and thoughts wholly occupied—not with doubts or fears as to the reception of his addresses, but with arrangements of his future plans, internally feeling and believing that if he married Margy at this particular juncture, he might save her from precipitation into the depths of gloomy puritanism, and catching her just as she was sliding down the precipice, recover her, and restore her to the sweet and chastened cheerfulness which

first had decided him in his choice—of her fortune.

Baron Gremier says—and says with wonderfully good sense—speaking of Bouret's prophetic book, "*Le vrai bonheur*," upon every page of which was written "Le Roi est venu chez Bouret," and in which he anticipated the events of 1840 in the year 1760.

"Ce que je sais, c'est qu'une bombe, poussée hors de son mortier par un telle force de poudre, en egard à une telle resistance de l'air, décrit nécessairement une telle parabole. Elle s'élevera à une telle hauteur; mais lorsqu'elle y sera arrivée, il faudra bien qu'elle descende. Voilà l'image et l'histoire des empires. Celui qui arrêterait la bombe au point de sa plus grande élevation serait un Dieu; celui qui l'entreprend soit en agissant, soit en écrivant, n'est qu'un fou."

What the accomplished Frenchman said of nations, Peregrine thought of Margy; and as we have already found him advocating the doctrine

that no strong passion stands still, but either advances or recedes daily and hourly, it is easy to imagine that it seemed to him a matter of vital importance to prevent the fall of the young lady by checking her flight before she had reached the highest possible pitch of maudlin absurdity.

When morning came and breakfast was over, Peregrine prepared himself with no common care for his visit to the Mintons. The weather was propitious for the philanthropic ramble of the young lady, and as it was a half holiday at the schools, the opportunity of confessing his feelings would easily and naturally occur.

Peregrine was puzzled upon one point only, and that turned upon his hesitation between policy and propriety, inasmuch as he doubted whether to speak to Minton first upon the subject of his "honourable intentions," or to follow uncle Noll's advice and "pop" in the first instance to Margy. A brief consideration of the subject brought him to the determination to do

the latter, and thus resolved, he mounted his horse and proceeded to the home of his beloved.

On his way thither he encountered Mr. Slobberton Mawks going, as he presumed, his pastoral rounds: a cold bow was all the acknowledgment the saintly young gentleman vouchsafed him, and certainly Peregrine was not in the smallest degree disposed to bring him to any more sociable communication. A few minutes after this rencontre, Peregrine was met by Minton's coachman galloping the Squire's favourite horse: *he* touched his hat to Peregrine, but the expression of his countenance was peculiar, and Peregrine felt that in spite of his speed he either wished to ask or tell him something;—nothing, however, passed, except the horses, that of Mr. Bunce being even more startled at the very rapid career of the plump Phaeton than his master. Peregrine's apprehension was, that somebody had been taken ill at the Squire's, and that the coachman was either

flying after the apothecary, or the parson—or both.

Equally anxious and excited, he therefore urged his steed into a canter, and reached the *Squiry* earlier than he had originally intended, and, using the familiarity of intimacy, rode into the stable-yard, dismounted, and gave the animal into the charge of a groom-boy whom he found leaning against a wall, earning his board, lodging, clothes, wages, and washing, in a manner the best calculated to afford him the least trouble. Having done which, and knowing all the "ways of the house," he proceeded through what was called the "little gate," into the grounds, proposing to enter the mansion by some of the windows, which, as the reader is already aware, opened into a verandah and thence to the lawn.

Treading lightly over the turf, his ears were suddenly attracted to a dialogue carried on, not in the gentlest tone, between the Squire and his lady; and although Peregrine was as curious as

his neighbours, he would have scorned to become an eaves-dropper, but placed as he was within a dozen yards of the contending parties, he was apprehensive that if he exhibited himself suddenly, he might get all the credit of having listened to the earlier part of the parley, without having, in point of fact, benefited by incurring the imputation. This dread, coupled perhaps with a little natural and by no means impertinent solicitude to comprehend the nature and subjects of quarrels and discussions in a family of which he was so soon to become a member, induced Peregrine to retrace his steps for two or three yards, and glide suddenly into a little *bosquet* of evergreens, whose favouring shelter had not been injured by the chills of autumn, and which served to conceal from the drawing-room windows a dairy or some such building, which, unless so hidden, would have been an eye-sore. In this *bocage* stood Peregrine, almost trembling lest the dairy-maid or anybody else

should approach his hiding-place, and heard distinctly that which follows:—

"I can't believe it yet," said Minton; "no—I can't—I certainly have seen a change—a great change; but considering the position I hold here—looked up to, as the benefactor of Twigglesford, I cannot bring myself to think that even if she could have been prevailed upon to do such a thing, anybody in the position of that fellow would have dared—dared, I use the word advisedly,—to have been, as the books say, 'aiding and abetting her;'—no, Mrs. M.; I'll have the ponds dragged—I'll——"

"What's the use of *that*, M.?" said Mrs. Minton; "they cannot both be in a pond."

"I almost wish they were," said Minton.

Peregrine's attention was doubled; something serious had occurred—no doubt Miss Dory and her Hibernian horn-blower had taken themselves off. "Good riddance too," thought Bunce; "I shall get quit of his horrid jokes, at which I

can't help laughing, and so be able the more easily to adapt myself to the sober ways of the dear gentle Margy."

"You see her bed was not slept in," said Minton, "so nobody can tell when she went; and in these days of steam and iron she may be a hundred and fifty miles off by this time; still I *do* think something worse has happened to her."

"Nothing worse *can* have happened to her," said the consolatory mother. "All this comes of over-educating people, M."

"There is no use, my dear Mrs. M., to argue, or talk, or reason," said Minton; "what are we to *do?* that's the question; what are we to say when Bunce comes?—he's sure to be here soon; at present, perhaps, the history is not generally known to the public; the respect due to my character, and the interest I take in the welfare of the people, may check the activity of their gossip, but it can't be long concealed."

"Why, tell him at once," said Mrs. M., "that is, if you care so much about him."

"Yes, I *do* care a good deal about him," said Mr. Minton, "because he knows a good many people; his uncle is rich—an odd old fellow, and a bit of what *I* call a bore; but Bunce himself is sharp and clever, and fond of the girl—"

"And was *she* fond of *him?*" asked Mrs. Minton.

"Why," said Minton, "considering myself a judge in these matters, I should have said decidedly yes; but latterly she has grown so glumpy and dumpy, that I don't know what she was fond of; and *if* what you think is true, and *that* fellow is the partner of her flight, it will be a shock upon Bunce, no doubt; however it is an ill wind that blows nobody good—Dory shall have the whole of Margy's five-and-twenty thousand pounds in addition to her own."

This last speech rang particularly strong in Peregrine's ears;—a new order of things burst upon his mind,—it was Margy who had fled, and Dory remained; and Dory would have fifty thousand pounds instead of five-and-twenty, and fifty thousand *was* the sum.

"I'm exceedingly glad," said Minton, "that our friend M'Larrup was gone this morning before anything was known of the matter."

More music to Peregrine's ear. The bugler had sounded a retreat—probably defeated and rejected by the vivacious object of his affections. Who the fellow was, the suspected partner of Margy's flight, he had not yet ascertained: he knew it was not Slobberton Mawks, because he had met him meek and placid as usual, nor, even if he had not, would his thoughts have glanced towards him.

It *did*, however, strike him, that Miss Margaret Minton *did* sometimes cast her eyes in a rather worldly manner upon the nephew of the schoolmistress, who officiated as master of the boys' department. He was a fine handsome person, standing some six feet in height, gentle and simple in behaviour, and, with all Mr. Slobberton Mawks's seriousness, exhibited a sort of winning solicitude for Miss Margy's personal comforts and convenience during her often-made

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and long-protracted visits at the schools, that he at length became the object of her daily thoughts, the subject of her nightly dreams, until all the bright visions of her future happiness were identified with this godly young man,—he was, in fact, the true saint of her idolatry. "Just," as Miss Prudence Barnard says to Lady Betty—

> "Just with Roger's head of hair on,
> Roger's mouth and pious smile."

The coincidence certainly was strange and strong. The pious virgin had suddenly disappeared; and the devout youth had simultaneously absconded. In how far his exemplary aunt, the trusty guardian of the rising generation of Twigglesford females, was privy to or concerned in the elopement, it is not possible as yet to determine; but one thing is certain, that Miss Margery, in discussing with that most respectable individual the pleasures of benevolence, did mention that she was enabled to gratify her feelings, and work out her principles to a certain extent, from

having had two hundred and fifty pounds a year left her by her aunt, who was also her god-mother, over which her father had no controul, and with which he was good enough never to interfere: he certainly made an allowance to her sister to the same amount, but that of course was voluntary, and therefore precarious; but *hers* was independent.

Peregrine having heard as much as he wished, and infinitely more than he expected to hear, backed out of his snuggery, and carefully retraced his steps, recrossed the stable-yard, and, advancing to the front door of the house, rang the bell, and was forthwith ushered into the library, or, as Minton was pleased to call it, his court-room.

"Mr. Bunce," says the servant, throwing open the door. "Bunce," said Minton, advancing to shake him by the hand, "how are you?—how are you?—how is my old friend, your excellent uncle, to-day?"

"Quite well, thank you," replied the grateful

nephew for so affectionate an inquiry after the "bore."

"How is Mrs. Minton?" asked Bunce, rather surprised at not finding her in the room.

"Pretty well—pretty well," said Minton; "she has just gone up stairs."

"And the young ladies?" said Peregrine.

"Quite well—quite well," said Minton. "Your little favourite has left us for a day or two—gone to see some friends of hers. I thought it would mend her spirits; for she, I assure you, participates considerably in my feelings and disposition, and over-exerts herself for the good of others,—in fact, our great delight is to be of use to Twigglesford."

"And Miss Minton?"

"She is in her room," said the veracious papa. "You'll dine with us?—eh?—you must—or else we shall think Margy is the magnet—what!—you must excuse *me*, but there'll be Dory and her mama to talk to, and you'll have them all to yourselves, for our friend the Captain

has taken himself off. I have many important things to attend to—some parochial investigations to make—and a complaint about Dobbs's boar-pig, which I must get ringed—it is incalculable the mischief which has accrued to my neighbours from his grubbing; then we have a vestry at three, in which the great question of the ducks in the rector's pond comes on; as the reverend doctor is not here, and I—very differently from some of my family—am an uncompromising vindicator of the Church and its members, I am determined to assert her rights."

"Quite ortho*ducks*," said Peregrine, whose dreadful propensity for punning had been completely subdued during the last stage of Margy's pious fever, and now burst out with redoubled fury.

"Ha! ha!" exclaimed Minton; "very good—very good; only the matter is not one to joke about. however, I'll just step up stairs to Dory, and let her know you are here; for she seems

rather glumpy herself—her sister's going away is something; but, between you and me, I think she and her particular friend, Captain M'Larrup, have had what they call a tiff—he did not want to go, or she didn't want him to stay, or something. 'Gad, I know, as the people say, 'all the fat's in the fire,' but for my own part, wholly engrossed as I am with public affairs, I let all domestic matters take their course: my maxim is, Do as you would be done by. My girls know they are their own mistresses: if they please themselves, they please me—eh?—that's the way: so till half past four take care of yourself."

Saying which, Mr. Minton proceeded to announce that Mr. Bunce was below and would dine; adding, that he would get Fleam the apothecary, and perhaps Casey the attorney, to join them,—at the same time cautioning both mother and daughter to be in the "same story" with himself as to Margy's absence; the fact being, and which rendered the philosophical

conduct of the family under such apparently distressing circumstances less extraordinary, that Margy had left a note for her sister stating the truth—whatever that was, and entreating her prayers for her happiness, and an eventual restoration to her affection and society.

Mrs. Minton knew the truth too,—but neither mother nor daughter dare proclaim it to papa authoritatively,—they dreaded the effects which his certainty of the fact might possibly produce upon the "people" of Twigglesford: and, to do full justice to the virtuous hypocrisy of all parties, it must be stated, that when Mrs. Grout the schoolmistress, aunt of Joseph Grout, and it is to be hoped by this time aunt-in-law of the *ci-devant* Miss Margaret Minton, missed her nephew from his daily duty in the seminary, her surprise and astonishment seemed equalled only by her alarm and anxiety.

"There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which taken at the flood leads on to fortune."

Peregrine Bunce resolved to embark forth-

with: by his excellent generalship he had made himself acquainted with the untoward circumstances that had occurred exactly at the moment when the knowledge could be made available to his purposes. Had he waited to be informed by the family of Margy's defection and probable marriage, any sudden change in his movements might have been considered as consequent upon his disappointment and defeat in that quarter, and then the transfer of his attentions to her sister would have appeared like heartlessness, or revenge for his wrongs; and if he had been so informed authoritatively, his intelligence would probably not have included the fact that Dory's fortune was doubled by the event: but now—ignorant of the cause of Margy's absence, he could fairly and properly take advantage of it, and ingratiate himself with the wealthier sister, who, as if every thing were fated to combine and conspire favourably for him, had, according to papa's notion, parted in anger with her Captain, who, after all, might never have had any serious

intentions beyond making himself, as Peregrine thought, "infernally agreeable," and who was thus opportunely removed from the field at the very moment when his absence was most important.

That Peregrine Bunce was vain, even if it had not been previously admitted, nobody who glances at the concatenation of thoughts and designs just displayed to the reader's notice could doubt; but one thing ought to be conceded, namely, that to a man of his sanguine temper and self-approbation, the looks and manner of Dory Minton did, to a certain extent, justify his notion that he was not *dis*agreeable to her: more than once she had quitted her friend the Captain to listen to Peregrine's conversation; and, in fact, it was not until he considered it politic to assume the puritanical character and phraseology, that she quite gave him up. She was a remarkably shrewd young woman, and left him off, as it were, not so much because the style he had adopted was disagreeable to her, or

because she would not interfere with her sister's pious work of regeneration, but because she was perfectly aware that it was an assumption, that he was struggling—not devoutly—with his nature and disposition to act a part merely for the purpose of ingratiating himself with his intended wife—

> "With face and fashion to be known
> For one of pure election;
> With eyes all white, and many a groan;
> With neck aside to draw in tone,
> With harp in 's nose—or he is none."

"Well, Mr. Bunce!" said Dory, entering the room; "so here you are, without your friend and companion."

"Forgive me," said Bunce, "I hope I find both in you."

"Oh, you are too civil by half," said Dory; "you know what I mean—Margy has played truant."

"So I hear," said Peregrine, "and I must say, I do not regret it, provided change of air

and change of scene and society tend to enliven her spirits; she really looks at the world most gloomily. I cannot help thinking that your exceedingly good curate has a great deal to answer for."

"I suppose he believes he is doing his duty," said Dory, "but I am sure he has produced an effect upon her mind which can neither benefit her here nor hereafter."

"Egad," said Peregrine, pulling up the shirt-collars, which, when he arrived at the Squiry, under different views, he had tucked down, in order to give himself a serious air,—"Egad, you are right; rely upon it, Miss Dory, there is nothing more foreign to the spirit of the protestant religion than unnecessary gloom."

"Why," said Dory,—looking at him with a pair of black eyes, such as one *does* see sometimes, conveying as much to the mind as all the words in Johnson's Dictionary could convey, properly arranged for the purpose,—"*I* always thought so; but it struck me you were rapidly

falling into the same line, and became, as *I* thought, proportionately dull and—I know you'll forgive me—disagreeable."

"Ah! there it is," said Peregrine; "you tyrants can't endure the slightest defection from your authority: poor dear Margy, perhaps, when she returns will be better—I say better, for upon my honour and word, Miss Minton, I do assure you I went on humouring her fancy, really and truly because I thought opposition would be seriously injurious—"

"—— And because," said Dory, "you felt that her interest in your improvement and edification was genuine and sincere."

It was difficult for Peregrine at this point to keep his countenance,—knowing all he did actually know, and suspecting a great deal more; but he was by no means a bad actor, as the reader knows, and he took the favourable opportunity of throwing in a little bit of sentiment.

"I believe," said he, "so firmly believe, in

the ingenuousness of women, and am so completely satisfied of their candour and consistency, that I honestly confess I feel grateful—yes, deeply grateful for any manifestation of interest on the part of an amiable, well-bred, well-educated young lady, however indifferent I may, in the worldly sense of the word, be to her personal charms or her mental attractions."

"Oh, Mr. Bunce!" said Dory; "wicked Mr. Bunce! you don't mean to say that the personal charms of Margy, and her mental attractions, did not produce an effect upon you; how else do you account for the total change from 'gay to grave,' which her influence has worked upon you during the last month?"

"Influence! my dear Miss Minton!" said our hero: "what you take for influence is simply a friendly interest."

"Very probably," said Dory, in a tone and with a look which, to any less adventurous speculator than our friend, could not have failed to be uncomfortable.

"I have already said," continued he, "that I saw Margy rapidly descending into the vale of gloom, and—"

"—— And so," interrupted Dory, "you thought you might as well take a stroll in the shade with her. Now do you know, that I know more of you than you perhaps think I do: your natural character is full of gaiety and playfulness—like mine; you have been making yourself unhappy for I don't know how many days, in order to sympathize with my poor deluded sister—all against the grain, Mr. Bunce! —take my advice—try to redeem her—retrieve her from the melancholy into which she has fallen, and, instead of adding to the rapidity of her tumble by associating yourself in her pursuits, bring her back to her wonted spirits and the usual amusements of our little family circle."

This speech confirmed Peregrine in his first supposition,—that Dory always preferred *him* to the Captain, inasmuch as *he* knew what *she* did

not know that he *did* know—that Margy was gone, if not past redemption, at least past all chance of a return to the domestic circle.

"Ah," said Peregrine, with a sigh; "to do that I have no power—nor is it likely I should have: where the heart is not engaged, all efforts to affect an interest are vain; had I been fortunate enough to have engaged the affections of a being full of talent and animation—"

"—— Like *me*," said Dory, archly; "and perhaps if you had, will you be kind enough to tell me what would have happened to you?"

"By heavens, Miss Minton," exclaimed Peregrine in an impassioned tone.

"Hush! hush!" said Dory; "swearing, Mr. Bunce! what would Margy and her confessor Mr. Mawks say if they heard you?"

"I care not," said Peregrine, "I never did care: all that has passed has been the madness of despair—I have been mistaken—I have been deluded; and the moment your sister returns,

I shall—after what you have said—consider it necessary to explain to her the real state of my feelings."

"When," said Dory, "do you expect her back?"

"Your father says in a few days," said Bunce.

"And where do you think she is gone?" said Dory.

"On a visit to some friends of yours and hers, as Mr. Minton says," answered Bunce.

"And you believe *that?*" asked Dory.

"Of course—why not?" said Bunce.

"Why, if you *do*," said Dory, "you sadly wasted your time in listening under the laurels, by the dairy-door, to the confidential conversation of my worthy and respectable parents."

"The what!" said Bunce.

"Don't affect ignorance," said Dory, "and don't deny the fact; the windows of my room command that bower—I saw the whole of your proceeding—I have told my father of it—he has told me,

as nearly as he could recollect it, the dialogue you overheard between him and my mother. I don't mean to say, Mr. Bunce, that your sudden conversion from Cant and Margy is at all attributable to my father's expressed determination to deprive her of her fortune in my favour, in consequence of that, which *you* are perfectly aware is not a visit to any friends of ours; but I would, as a friend, advise you to find the way through the same 'side gate' to the stables. Get your horse, and deprive us of the pleasure of your company at dinner, assuring yourself, however angry my father may be with my sister for doing an unaccountably foolish thing, that she shall *not* suffer to the extent which he, in a moment of anger, declared she should, and that therefore I am not so 'great a catch' as you think me."

"My dear Miss Minton," said Bunce, turning as white as a sheet, "I—really—upon my honour!"

"Honour, Mr. Bunce," said Dory, "do as

I advise—it is your only course; I am sure papa, with his strong feelings in favour of the people of Twigglesford, as he says, would not do them justice by permitting you to remain amongst us."

"But really——"

"Really," said Dory.

At this moment a shrill noise was heard, as of a horn blown skilfully.

"What's that?" said Bunce.

"Captain M'Larrup's key-bugle," said Dory. "I was obliged to order him away this morning on some official duty, which, if I had not forced him to attend to, I feared he would neglect, in order to stay here; so you see I turn *my* influence to some account. I will now wish you a good morning; for I must run to meet him, and, in parting with you—as far as I am concerned—for ever, I would earnestly repeat my advice as to the side gate and the stable-yard, at your earliest convenience."

Saying which, Dory darted off, leaving Mr. Pere-

grine Bunce in a state not particularly enviable. He certainly had botched the business; and any further attempt upon the hearts or fortunes of the Mintons was evidently fruitless; accordingly, when Dory quitted the room by one window, he abdicated by the other, and in crossing the courtyard to get his horse, had the additional satisfaction of seeing two maids (as they are called) looking out of the laundry casement, laughing—evidently at *him*—in the most ecstatic manner.

CHAPTER VI.

THE rapidity with which important events—at least important in their degree—happen in this world, is rather startling. That Rome was not built in a day, was a favourite saying of Mr. Minton's, and one which nobody can controvert: but Rome might be burnt down in a night. Look at our own houses of Parliament, which seemed really and integrally part of the British constitution,—destroyed, annihilated, gone, in a few short hours. Descend we from those to the pert-looking mansion of Squire Minton, and look at the change of affairs which half a day has worked in that establishment.

A pious daughter, who on the preceding evening was looked upon as the most perfect of

human beings, has eloped with the parish schoolmaster, Joseph Grout. Her devoted lover having turned listener, and therefore having transferred—not his affections—but his addresses to her lively sister, has received her *congé* instead of the kicking he deserved. That lovely sister has accepted the gallant captain M'Larrup, with her father's consent; and the Reverend Slobberton Mawks, for what reason nobody exactly knows, and nobody seems inclined to ask, has, to use a conventional term, "bolted," leaving behind him nothing but his pet sheep and a pale-faced page-clad foot-boy.

What the magisterial energies of Mr. Minton may do in the investigation and elucidation of this abrupt and mysterious retreat, it is not for us to surmise; indeed our interest in the affairs of the Twigglesford community ceases simultaneously with the abdication, or more properly speaking the ejection, of Mr. Peregrine Bunce.

To describe the feelings of this last-mentioned gentleman as he wended his way homeward,

would require infinitely greater powers of language than the narrator of this history possesses. It was not simply the defeat which overwhelmed him, but the detection of his meanness, and the additional meanness of changing his course, founded upon the original meanness of listening. As to any further attempt even upon the friendship of the family, it was evidently out of the question. But even all this accumulation of disasters was light when compared with his anticipations of uncle Noll's raillery, and the triumphant chuckle with which his detail of his disasters would be received by the old "bore." Peregrine, however, was a wary young gentleman, and it is not quite impossible that in the course of his ride he might have made up a version of the history a little at variance with the real facts.

Lord Chesterfield somewhere says, that contempt is never forgiven, although resentment is sometimes forgot. The *abias* which Peregrine had received from Dory would have been robbed

of half its sharpness if it had been gravely pronounced; if Mr. Minton himself had broken off the acquaintance,—nay, if he had been thrust from the door in a serious quarrel, he would have felt comparatively happier than he was in his present condition.

One resolution Peregrine had arrived at before he reached his uncle's gate, the prudence and rationality of which the reader will readily admit,—that of immediately retreating from the scene of his discomfiture; for although he had formed no plan for his future attacks, it was evident that his remaining where he was could do him no service, while it might possibly, or indeed would probably, involve him in occasional meetings with his quondam friends, which could not fail to be exceedingly painful to at least one of the parties.

"Well, Peregrine," said his uncle, as he entered the snuggery; "well—did you give them my message?—are they coming?—when?—what day?—I shall be delighted—all of them—a soci-

able squéeze—pressing invitation, as the old joke goes."

"Why," said Peregrine, looking as calm and composed as under the circumstances it was possible to do; "I think, my dear uncle, we may as well postpone the pleasure of seeing them here."

"Eh!—what!" exclaimed Noll; "postpone—why postpone?—never put off any thing except your great coat on a hot day, or your hat to a lady, as the joke goes: why delay?—delays are dangerous—recollect the old maxim as you may find it in every book in the world—

> 'Happy's the wooing,
> That's not long a-doing.'

eh, Peregrine?"

"That's true," said Bunce; "but there *are* cases which terminate very speedily and suddenly too, the results of which are not so happy as might upon your principle be expected."

"Hey," said the uncle; "any thing wrong? halting on the march? what?"

"Why, not exactly *that*," said Peregrine; "the march has been exceedingly rapid,—the object of my affections has suddenly disappeared."

"What, become an invisible girl!" said Noll.

"True," said Peregrine, "but——"

"——But what?" said Noll; "having refused—rejected—cut you?"

"Why, no," faltered Peregrine; "it had not come to *that*;—she went—in fact, my dear uncle, I am not sufficiently aware of the circumstances of her going, to describe them particularly: her father is very much shocked, and I, of course, am astounded, and, to say truth, resolved never to see the faces of any of the family again."

"Dear me, dear me," said Noll; "why so? why so? Some of them have very pretty faces, but——"

"In short," said Peregrine, "Miss Margaret has eloped with the teacher at one of her schools."

"A young idea-shooter, eh?" said uncle Noll; "that's severe—uncommon: those who study grammar should look out for the accidence—eh?—an old joke—never mind—what! is it a regular conjunction?—all right?—eh?"

"*I* think it all wrong," said Peregrine; "but, as I have just said, I really am not sufficiently well informed upon the subject to come to any conclusion but one, which is, to have nothing more to do with the family: the father vulgar to excess; the mother even transcending the father; one daughter a saint, and the other a hoyden; one having eloped, and the other——"

"——No scandal about queen Elizabeth," interrupted uncle Oliver; "I'm sorry young sober-sides should have started, but the other—what d'ye call her, Dory, was left. I know the world, Peregrine,—know it well; rely upon what I predict and prognosticate,—if this girl has committed what my poor old sister used to call a 'piccadilly,' Minton will cut her off with nothing, and her whole share will go to the

sister,—I know it, my Perry—sure of it—eh?—why not try your hand there?

"'How happy could I be with either,
Were t' other dear charmer away!'"

"My dear uncle," said Peregrine, looking sentimental, dignified, and almost indignant at the suggestion, "I thought you had known me better than to suppose my feelings so much under my command, or my principles so mercenary, that I should be able upon the defection of the object of my hopes and wishes to transfer my affections to another."

Hereabouts he became very much moved, and flourished his pocket-handkerchief in a way to excite the commiseration of his eccentric but really kind-hearted relation.

"Why, to be sure," said Noll; "if you come to *that*, I hav'n't a word to say. I never was married myself, and perhaps am not a fair judge: all I know is, money is money, and a woman is a woman,—and moreover, that sad or merry, tall or short, fat or lean, a woman with forty thou-

sand pounds will make a better wife for a poor man than a woman with twenty:

'Take your wife as men buy plate,
Not for the fashion but the weight,'

as the old joke goes."

"That may be good reasoning as far as the plate goes," said Peregrine.

"Hah! hah!" interrupted Noll—

"'*Plato*, thou reasonest well,'

what?"

"I assure you, sir," said Peregrine, "I am in earnest, and my feelings with regard to the loss—the yet unaccountable loss—of this young lady are so strong, and I am sure will continue so, that so far from attempting the sort of exchange at which you hint, I never shall be able to revisit the scenes of my former happiness, or associate upon terms of even friendly intercourse with the rest of her family."

"Oh!" said uncle Oliver, "you are a good fellow, and your heart is in the right place:

then I suppose you mean to leave me—at least for a time."

"Why," said Bunce junior, "I confess, after the shock my feelings have received—I should—indeed I should, my dear uncle ——"

"Well, then," said Noll, "go—go—rely upon it, it's the best thing in the world to do—and as for the Mintons, why, you know, after this I shall care nothing about them—no, not a bit—not a tittle, go—"

"Yes," said Peregrine, who never made a move without a motion, "but, uncle, how *can* I go?—wheels won't work without anti-attrition—oil—something."

"I see, I see," said Noll, "you want a something to give the impetus!—what!—odd enough, as the joke goes, that a cheque is essential to your flight—hear, hear. I'll do that for you—I love to encourage matrimony; whither you are going I know not, I ask not—will a hundred do?"

Peregrine, who had pitched his highest flight

at half the amount, looked doubtfully, but answered in the affirmative: the cheque-book was sent for—the cheque written—delivered to Peregrine—folded and lodged nearest his heart, *i.e.* in his pocket, and horses forthwith ordered to be ready in two hours.

Somebody, whose axioms upon matters of taste and fashion are universally recorded, is reported to have said that "through London" is the nearest road from any one part of England to another. As far as regarded Mr. Peregrine Bunce, the world was all before him; and driven out of his Twigglesford paradise, and without any settled plan of proceeding, it was quite natural he should fix upon the metropolis as his destination, at least in the first instance, however short might be his stay, or however soon he might take "a fresh departure."

In the season at which our hero—if anything so very unheroic may be so called—determined on proceeding to the modern Babylon, nothing certainly was likely to turn up to meet his

wishes or suit his views. Still, after the serio-comic injunctions of uncle Noll, the wary nephew was resolved to keep the one great object constantly in sight, and it is not quite out of the reach of the possible to imagine that *faute de mieux* he had even debated in his own mind the advantage of advertising in the newspapers for an agreeable help-meet with a fortune adequate to that of her humble servant, begging to be favoured with letters in reply, addressed to A. B. or X. Y. Z. at some post-office, or circulating library convenient to his residence.

But no; by a strange enough coincidence, he found upon his arrival at his London lodgings something which tended to give a direction to his movements; and here it ought to be mentioned that he kept and retained these lodgings in perpetuity, varying only his elevation,—that is to say, in the dull time of the year Peregrine occupied the first floor of the house in which he had long been domiciled, but as the spring advanced, he followed the example of the mer-

cury in the Torricellian tube, and mounted; so that when his obliging landlady could get more for the first floor than he thought it either fit or convenient to pay her for it, he ascended to the second,—a proof of considerable elasticity of mind, and a regard for the "main chance," which does not ordinarily characterize men who have not seen more winters and summers than had passed over the head of our friend Peregrine.

The letter destined to be the guiding star of his destiny came to him by the general post from Brighton, and contained a friendly invitation to that most enlivening watering-place. The missive was from a sincere old friend, who, although he could not offer him rooms in his house, entreated him to favour him and his wife with his society; in order to induce him to do which, he mentioned that an extremely agreeable widow with a delightful daughter were staying with them. "She is," said Mr. Dumbledore, "a widow, witty and

wealthy—and, as for her daughter, her *naïveté* is charming,—so come."

The fisherman says—

> "When the wind is in the east,
> 'Tis neither good for man nor beast;
> But when it bloweth from the south,
> It blows the bait into the fishes' mouth."

And Peregrine felt quite delighted at this invitation from the southern coast, careless at the moment whether the elder or younger lady were eventually to turn out the object of his cares and devotions, inasmuch as, in addition to the sheer and actual disappointment of Margy Minton's regular "throw over," the delight which he should experience as a mere matter of revenge and triumph, in securing a better prize in that most hazardous of all lotteries—matrimony, would be inexpressible; and so he wrote a letter by return, although that which he found on his arrival had been lying at his lodgings for some days, announcing his intention of most grate-

fully availing himself of Mr. Dumbledore's kind invitation, and moreover begging him to direct one of his servants to secure a bed-room for him at one of the hotels in the neighbourhood,—a precaution quite in keeping with Peregrine's notion of lightening the labour of feeding by being " near his work."

And now, parenthetically, let us for a moment look at this Brighton, to which our friend Peregrine is going. Of all the wonders of England in the way of increase, both in extent and importance, nothing can equal it ;—from a mere cluster of fishermen's huts it has become a splendid town,—thanks to the patronage of George the Fourth ! It is, in truth, a world of his creation ; and the notorious predominance of loyal and monarchical principles, amongst its now numerous population, is a sufficient proof of the goodness of their memory, and the genuineness of their gratitude.

Brighton has one striking advantage over most other watering-places ; where there are no

trees—the changes of seasons signify nothing, and the combination of sea and sunshine renders its chalky terraces and gravelled esplanades as gay in January as in June. This is no new remark, nor when it was first made, did it apply to this now southern outwork of the metropolis;—its increase of size, and the consequent increase in the size of its buildings, have totally altered its character; and if they have not destroyed, completely changed the nature of its amusements, and the sociability and perhaps sociality of its society,—a quarter of a century ago, with the exception of the Pavilion itself and one or two other mansions, there was scarcely a house in Brighton in which one could conveniently dine more than six or eight people—hence the snugness of its winter associations: *then* the old Steyne was the centre of attraction, the focus of all the folks to be found; and nothing can more strongly mark the barbarism, which abandoning its neighbourhood as a residence was then considered, than the

fact, (remembered by sundry persons still extant,) that when an elderly lady, kind, wealthy, fat, and hospitable, one day tumbled down stairs in her own house, and damaged some of her ribs, the remark of one of her dearest friends—dearest too because a constant guest at her dinner-table—was, "Serve her right, for living at such a distance from civilization as the *New* Steyne."

Throwing associations much further back into matters of really important history, Brighton possesses an exceedingly deep interest, as being the point whence escaped that witty unwise monarch Charles the Second. No detailed account of that escape has ever appeared in print, except in a work written by a gentleman of the name of Parry, and published seven years ago,—called an "Historical and Descriptive Account of the Coast of Sussex." At that period the manuscript had only recently come into the possession of the British Museum, and was not previously known to be in existence.

Mr. Parry obtained a limited permission to publish it from the Trustees; but we presume, as Mr. Parry has had seven years' enjoyment of the privilege, we may avail ourselves of it here, where it seems exceedingly apposite as a quotation, which we accordingly do, prefacing it with Mr. Parry's own words. "It may not be impertinent to add," says that gentleman, "in this captious age, that we insert this ancient record, as a curious article of history, which may now be read with the interest of a romance." It is the narrative of Colonel Gounter, of Rackton, in Sussex, who had the happiness to be instrumental in the business, as it was taken from his mouth by a person of worth, a little before his death — we give it as it was then given, in the first person, the account having, when formally reduced to writing, been transcribed in the third.

"The King," says Colonel Gounter, "was now at Heale, within three miles of Salisbury, where we begin our storie. My Lord Willmot,

his faithfull and watchful attendant at Salisburie; there Dr. Hinchman, now the Right Reverend Bishop of Salisbury, (inspired by God himself, as well may be thought by the successe,) gave him counsell: first to try att Lawrence Hydes, Esq., living at Hinton Dambray, in Hamshire, neere the sea-side, what could be done for a passage: then, if that did not succeed, to repaire to me at Rackton, fower miles from Chichester, in Sussex, being verie confident of my fidelitie, and that I would contribute to the uttmost of my power to bring this great and weightie business, as for the difficulties they must encounter, soe for the consequence of conclusive to a good end.

"Here before I proceed, I hope the reader will give mee leave to put in mind that wee wryte not an ordinarie storie, where the reader engaged by noe other interest than curiositie, may soone bee clogged with circumstances which signify no more unto him, but that the author was att good leisure, and was very confident of

his reader's patience. In the relation of miracles, every petty circumstance is materiall, and may affoard to the judicious reader matter of good speculation; of such a miracle especiallie, where the restauration of noe less than three kingdoms, and the author's own particular libertie and safetie, (of a good and faithful subject,) was att the stake—I may not therefore omit to lett him knowe howe things stood with me at that tyme.

"Not above fourteen dayes before, I was confined, upon paine of imprisonment, not to stirre five miles from home—In the very nick of tyme when I was first thought upon for soe great a worke, comes a messenger with a warrant from the Commissioners of Haberdashers' Hall, London, to summon me to appear before them within ten days, to pay twoe hundred pounds for my fifth and twentieth part, which they had sett upon mee, upon peyne of sequestration upon default. I first refused, and told the messenger that I was confined, and could not goe five miles

from home; but he left me the order, and told me it should be att my perill if I did not obey it.

"The next day I repaired to Chichester, fower miles from me, to the Commissioners, to shew them my order;—they peremptorily replyed, I must goe, and my order would bear me out. I went accordingly and compounded with them, and gott off a hundred of the twoe hundred I was sett att; but my credit being shaken, the current then running soe hard against the King, the royal party, and all good men, that I could not borrowe the money all in London, I was forced with all speede to repaire into the country, and go privally to my usurer, who had the security of my whole estates.—I showed him my danger, and requested to borrowe the money on my bond and former security; who readily condescended, and told me out the money. The next day I was to call for it, and seale the bond. I had no sooner ended this busines, beeing stayed by some friends longer

than I intended, butt that very night I came home, (being October 7, 1651,) I found some att my house whoe were come about their design. I think it will easily bee graunted by any that reades and considers, that this was not without a Providence, since that it is apparrent that if my friends had come before I was licensed to goe abroad, I must needes have been excused; and, if they had come much after, it was possible a meer restraint might have come betweene, or my liberty in goeing soe freely up and downe, after my busines ended, more suspected.

" But now to the storie and entertainment of my guests.—Betwixt eight and nine of the clock at night, I came home; entering in at my doore my ladye mett me, and told me there was in the parlour a Deavonshire gentleman sent by Mr. Hyde, aforesaid, about a reference which none besides myself could decide. At my comming in, I found my Deavonshire gentleman sitting att one end of the chimney, Captain Thomas

Gounter at the other, and my lady (which was gone in before) in the middle. The gentleman rose and saluted me—I presently knewe him to be the Lord Wilmot; which the noble Lord perceiving, took me asyde to the windowe.

"'I see you know me,' (said he,) 'doe not owne me.'

"Captain Thomas Gounter, my kinsman, for all he had a long tyme beene in the army, and under his command, knew him not; which was strange, the noble Lord beeing but meanly disguised.

"After a bottle of sack, a short collation, which was made readie as soon as it could, my Lord's man Swan, coming in to wayte, whispered his maister in the eare; and told him my Lord Wentworth's boy Lonie was without, and wished him to be carefull for feare the boy should know him,—he having been taken by Captaine Thomas Gounter in distress at Chelsey, and cloathed by him to waite upon him.

"Supper being ended, there was whispering

between my kinsman and my lady, and shee told him shee was confident of a disguise, and that it was the M^r. by his hand. He beate her off of it as much as he could, suspecting noe such matter himselfe. Within halfe an hower after supper, I offerred the noble Lord, then by name Mr. Barlowe, it being late, and as the greatest courtesie I could then shewe him, to waite upon him to his chamber, and to bedd; which hee readily accepted. I accordingly took up the candle, the noble Lord following mee, my lady and kinsman attending. When I came into the chamber, it beeing late, I desired my lady and kinsman to goe to bedd, and leave me; for I was bound to waite upon this gentleman awhyle. They tooke leave, and bidd him good-night.

" My Lord and I beeing alone, he broke the business to mee, with these words, sighing—

" ' The King of England, my maister, your maister, and the maister of all good Englishmen,

is neere you, and in great distresse—can you help us to a boate?'

"Looking very sadly, after some pause, I said, 'Is hee well?—is hee safe?'

"He said, 'Yeas.'

"I replyed, 'God be blessed,' and gave him a reason for my question; for if heé should not be secure, I doubted not but that I could secure him till a boate could be gotten.

"The noble Lord, not knowing what had been done, and what course had been taken by Mr. Hyde, for securing his Majesty at Heale, answered me that hee hoped hee was out of danger at present, but intended to be at my house with me on the Wen'sday. Soe he said, and soe it seems it was resolved; but second thoughts and unexpected accommodation elsewhere had altered the designe. However, upon the hearing of this, my thoughts were much raised in expectation of such a guest; until I was better informed, as I was soone after, to my

great content and satisfaction, knowing the house well, and the conveniences thereof, and the worth and fidelitie of the persons.

"Now to the maine business of procuring a boate—I told my Lord seriously, and nothing but the trueth, that for all I lived soe neare the sea, yet was there noe man living soe little acquainted with these kind of men. However, as I thought myselfe bound by all obligations sacred and civile to doe my utmost to preserve my king, so I did faithfully promise with all care and alacritie, yea expedition, (which I accounted to bee the life of such a business,) to accquitt myself of my dutie.

"The noble Lord, my honored friend (O that God had beene pleased to have spared him life), was abundantly satisfyed with this answer, hugging me in his armes and kissing my cheeke again and again. For that tyme I bid him good-night, desiring him to rest secure, for that I would watch whylest hee slept, and that I

doubted not but in good tyme all would bee well.

"Comming into my chamber I found my wyfe had stayed up for mee, and was very earnest to know whoe this was and what was his busines. I desired her to excuse me, assuring her it was nothing concerning her, or that would any wayes damnify her. Shee was confident there was more in it than soe, and enough she doubted to ruine me and all my family, and 'in that,' sayed shee, 'I *am* concerned,' breaking out into a very great passion of weeping, which I seeing tooke a candle, pretending to goe into the next room, but privately to my Lord Willmot, and accquainted himm how it was, asking his advice whether, as the case stood, it were any way amisse to accquaint her with it; that I durst passe my worde for the loyaltie and integritie of my wife, but, however, without his allowance shee should knowe nothing.

"My Lord replied, 'No, no, by all meanes

acquaint her with it.' I humbly thanked him, and badd him good-night againe. I comming into my chamber then unfolded the busines, wyped the teares of my ladys eyes, who smiling said, 'Goe on and prosper—yet I feare you will hardly doe it.' 'However,' said I, 'I must endeavour and will doe my best, leaving the success to God Almightie,' my lady deporting herself during the whole carriage of the busines with soe much discretion, courage, and fidelitie, that, (without vanitie bee it spoken) shee seemed (her danger considered) to outgoe her sexe; neyther will the reader thinck this an impertinent circumstance, since the successe of the busines did not a little depend upon her concurrance.

"Contenting myself with very little sleepe that night, I rose very early the next morning, beeing Wednesday, the 8th of October, as I had promised the Lord Willmot, and rode to Elmsworth, a place twoe miles from him and by the seaside, passing through Boome. I tooke an old man, a servant of myne formerly, John Day,

and trustié man and very loyall subject whoe was related to seamen of very good accoumpt, whoe with their barkes used to lye there; but they being out of the way could doe no good there, although fower yeares after I did, att the same place, att my own charges, hire a barke for the Lord Wilmot, who came over att his majesties command, and losing his designe was forced to come from almost the farthest north to the south before hee could gett a passage; soe few friends had then his sacred majestie in his distresses, now soe numerous in expectation of rewards.

"I hasted all I could home again to give my Lord accoumpt, who had promised not to stirre till I came; but being impatient of any delay, he had left my house, so that I met him within halfe a mile of it, and gave him accoumpt of my mornings walke, that nothing could be done where I had beene. The noble Lord and I ridde on and went to Langstone, a place by the sea, and where boates are. As he was riding

along, hee put his hand in his pocke& and missed his monèy; for coming away in hast from my house he had left it behinde on the bedd. Immediately I sent my man Swan for it. My wyfe hearing that my Lord was gone, which she much wondered att, had beene in his chamber and found in the middle of it a black purse full of gold, which she had secured, and gave it the man when hee came for it.

"When he came to Langstone we attempted all we could, but in vaine. The noble Lord and I eate oisters there, and then we parted: the Lord to Mr. Hyde's house aforesaid, there to expect the accoumpt of my proceedings. I then came home and immediately employed my kinsman, Captain Thomas Gounter (whoe by this had been made accquainted), to inquire of several other places, and to meet me next day att Chichester, to give me accoumpt, all which I imparted that night to my Lord Wilmot, att Mr. Hyde's house att Hinton Daubney aforesaid. After supper I tooke my leave of the Lord, it

being a very dismal night for winde and raine, which made the Lord very much to importune me to stay; but I refused, replying that delays were dangerous, and lett the weather be what it would, I had a sure guide.

"I touched at my owne house by the way betwixt one and twoe of the clock that night, and layd down upon my bedd, and after two houres rest, rose from bedd and went immediately to Chichester to meete my kinsman Thomas Gounter (9th of October) according to appointment, from whome I received this accoumpt, that both he and his kinsman, Mr. William Rishton, a loyall gentleman and one engaged all along in the warre under my command, had endeavoured all they could, but without succesee. Then I bethought myself and conceived the next and best expedient would be to treat with a French merchant, one that usually traded into France, and went to one Mr. Francis Mancell, a stranger then to me and only known unto me by face, as casually I had

met him with severall other companies, pretending to give him a visit, and to bee better acquainted with him. He received me courteously and entertained mee with a bottle or twoe of his French wine and Spanish tobacco.

"After a whyle I broke the busines to him, saying, 'I doe not only come to visite you, but must request one favour of you.' He replyed, 'Anything in his power.' Then I asked him if he could fraught a barke; for, said I, 'I have twoe speciall friends of myne that have been engaged in a duell, and there is mischief done, and I am obliged to gett them off if I can.' Hee doubted not but that att such a place as Brighthemston in Sussex, he could. I prest him then to go with me immediately, and if he could effect the busines I would give him fifty poundes for his paynes; but it being Stowe fair day there, and his partner out of the way, hee could not possibly untill the next day, and then hee promised me faithfully hee would goe with

mee and do his best. Soe accordingly wee agreed.

"Then I who had promised to the noble Lord Wilmot an accoumpt att Mr. Hyde's house aforesaid, once in twelve or twenty-four houres att farthest, repayred thyther accordingly, and told him all that was done. The noble Lord approved and liked my proceedings well. It being very late and very darke I borrowed a horse of my kinsman, Mr. Hide, whoe lent him his faulkeners horse, being as it seemes the best he then had, which served to carrie him home, and the next morning to Chichester.

"I tooke my own house in my waye, and rested upon a bedd for a whyle, and went unto Chichester, the 10th of October being Fryday, according to former appointment. The merchant being destitute of a horse, I horst him upon the horse borrowed of Mr. Hyde, and borrowed one for myself of my kinsman, Captaine Thomas Gounter, and went away accordingly,

desiring my kinsman to repaire unto my Lord Wilmot, and to give him the accoumpt of my departure from Chichester, in further prosecution of the busines, and to remaine with him in order to his commands during my absence. The merchant went immediately to inquire, but the seaman he chiefly depended upon was gone for Chichester, whoe had bargained for a fraught there; but as providence would have it, hee touched at Shoram, fower miles from Brighthemston. I perswaded the merchant to send to him immediately, to come to him upon earnest business, and I doubted not but he would come, which tooke effect accordingly. I had agreed with the merchant to treat with the boatman, being his affair and trade; I to sett by as newter, promising the merchant to make good, and to pay him whatever hee should agree for, but withall desired to gett itt as lowe as he could. We stayed there that night, and by Saturday, the 11th of October, by twoe of the clock made a perfect agreement, which was, that he was to

have sixty pounds paid him in hand before hee tooke them into the boate, for he would know what hee should carrie, or he would not treate. Soe that the merchant was forced to lett him, himselfe knowing no more than what I had said to him of the twoe friends, &c. Hee was to be in readiness upon an houres warning, and the merchant to stay there under pretence of fraughting his barke, to see all things in readiness against I and my twoe friends arrived. For I knew not when I should come, but privately promised the merchant to defray all his charges over and above the fifty pounds as aforesaid for his paines, which was afterwards accordingly done; but this fifty and the sixty poundes paid to the boateman, the King himselfe, before he went away, tooke order for, and his order was executed.

"All things agreed upon, I took leave of the merchant about 3 of the clock, to give my Lord Willmot this accoumpt, and came to Mr. Hyde's house aforesaid, between eight and nine in the

night, but my Lord and my kinsman were removed to a tenants' of my cousin Hydes, one Mr. Browne, and one that had married my cousin Gounter's sister; but coming into my cousin Hyde's house aforesaid, found there my cousin Hyde and Colonel Robert Phillips, in his chamber, goeing to bedd, whoe was very inquisitive to know how things stood. I gave, in short, that all things were well and in a readiness, upon which Colonel Phillips replyed, 'Thou shalt be a saint in my almanack for ever.'

"Mr. Hyde was very earnest to have me stay all night, and goe and give account the morrow morning; butt I desired to be excused for that I knew I was expected, and could not in honour but my account without delay. Whereupon Colonel Phillips would go with me, and we took leave of my cousin Hyde for that night, and went where my Lord Willmot was, and had earnestly expected me—after I had saluted him, and gave him a full account of all

proceedings, the noble Lord was infinitely pleased and satisfyed, and presently had it in consultation who should goe to the King; and it was agreed that Colonel Phillips should, by reason that I was much tyred out, and would neede rest for further employment.

"Soe Colonel Phillipps, upon Sunday the 12th of October, went to give the King an accoumpt, and to conduct him to the Lord Wilmot and to me. In the interim whylest they expected upon Munday the 13th of October, the Lord Wilmot and I and Captain Gounter beeing altogether at dinner, agreed to ride out upon the Downes. I for a blinde went to Hambledon, hard by, to give my sister a visitt, and there borrowed a brace of greyhounds, for that my cousin Gounter and other gentlemen were on the Downes, and hadd a mind to have a course att a haire, and 'twas possible if they did not beat too farre, and should stay out late, that they might all come and bee merry with her that

nyghte; howêver, she should be sure of her dogges. 'If you do, you shall be heartily welcome,' was her answer.

"I brought the greyhounds, and beat with my Lord and my cousin, until my tyme served, and then left them, resolving to ride on, till I mett the King; and just as I came to Warneford's town ende, from old Winchester, I mett Colonel Phillipps, conducting the King—being neere the houses, I ridde by them, and took no notice—went into an inne in the towne, called for some beare, and tooke a pipe, and stayed soe long that they were a topp old Winchester before I overtook them. When I had overtaken them, and done my dutie to his Majestie, I directed them the safest way, and I would ride before to find out my Lord Willmott; which beeing done, we all came together. The King and my Lord had some private discourse together.

"When we came to Brawde Half-penny, a little above Hambledon, the King spake to mee,

'Canst thou gett mee a lodging hereabouts?' I told him—I told him that my cozin Hyde's house aforesaid was taken up for him, and was very convenient, beeing neere and in the way: but whether his Majestie thought it too publick a place, or for what other reason I know not, hee said, 'Knowe you noe other?'—'Yeas, may it please your Majestie, I know divers where for a night wee may bee wellcome, and heere is one who married my sister, whose house stands privately and out of the way.'

"'Let us go thither,' said the King.

"Whylest we were consulting this affaire, Captain Thomas Gounter, my kinsman, and Swan, ridd scoutting about Broad Half-penny aforesaid; I conducting the King, my Lord Willmot, and Colonel Phillipps, to my sister's house, a private way and the backside of Hambledon, it beeing but half a myle from the place aforesaid.

"Alighting at the doore I led them in, the Lord Willmott following; the King putting

Colonel Robert Phillipps before him, saying, 'Thou lookest the most like a gentleman now.' Comming in, my sister mett him—we all saluted her—she brought us into a little parlour where there was a good fire—this was about candle-light—wine, ale, and bisketts were presently sett before us, with a very cheerfull countenance, as though the King's presence had had some secret influence upon her, whoe suspected nothing lesse than that a king was present.

"In an hour's space we went to supper, beeing all seett promiscuously att a round table; and having halfe supt, in comes my sister's husband, Mr. Thomas Symones, whoe, as it plainly appeared, had beene in company that day.

"'This is brave,' said he; 'a man can noe sooner be out of the way, but his house must be taken up with I know not whome;' and, looking in my face, 'Is it you?' said he, 'you

are welcome: and as your friends, so they are all.'

"Passing round the table, and viewing all the company, hee said, 'These are all Hyds now;' but peeping in the King's face, said of him, 'Here's a roundhead,' and, addressing his speech to mee, said, 'I never knewe you keepe Roundhead's company before.'

"To which I replyed, 'No matter—he is *my* friend, and I will assure you, noe dangerous man.'

"Att which words he clapt himself downe in a chaire next the King, and saying, 'Brother Roundhead, for his sake, thou art welcome;' all the whyle believing the King to be so indeede, and making himself (whether for feare or in courtesie,) to bee one too as he could act it. The King all the whyle complying with him to all our admirations. Now and then he would sweare before he was aware: for which the King reproved him—'Oh deare brother,

that is a 'scape; swear not, I beseech you.' Nevertheless, in that humour hee was, hee plyed us hard with strong waters and beare, the King not knowing well how to avoid it; but as somebody or other when he lookt asyde would take it out of his hand.

" Supper beeing ended, it being tenn of the clock, I began to bethink myself that the King had ridd neere fourty miles that day, and was to undergoe a very hard journey for the next; and how to gett the King out of his company, and to bedd, I could hardly devise. So at last I whispered my kinsman in the eare, saying, 'I wonder how thou shouldst judge soe right —he is a roundhead indeede, and iff we could gett him to bedd, the house were your owne, and we could be merry.' He readily submitted, and I presently (leaving the Lord Willmott behinde) conducted the King and Colonel Robert Phillipps (who lay in the King's chamber) to bedd.

" The King slept well all night, and by breake

of day I, putting up twoe neats' tongues in my pockets, what I thought we might neede by the way, we sett out and began our journey. We were no sooner come to Arundell Hill, as we rode close by the castle, but the governour Captain Morley mett us full butt—hunting. I, the better to avoid them, presently alighted, it beeing a steepe hill we were to goe downe, and my company (as was agreed before) did as I did; and soe happily we escaped them. The King beeing told who it was, replyed merrily, 'I did not like his starched mouchates.'

"Soe we came to Howton, where, on horseback, we made a stopp att an alehouse for some bread and drinck: and there our neats' tongues stood us in very good stead—and were heartily eaten. From thence, beiñg come to Bramber, we found the streetes full of soldiers on both sides the houses, who, unluckilie and unknowne to mee, were come thither the night before, to guard. We luckily (or rather by a verie speciall providence) were just come from their guarde

at Bramber-bridge, into the towne, for refreshment. We came upon them unawares, and were seene before we suspected anything. My Lord Willmot was ready to turne back, when I stept in and said, 'If we doe wee are undone; let us go on boldly, and wee shall not be suspected.' 'He saith well,' said the King. I went before, hee followed, and soe passed through without any hindrance.

"It was nowe betweene three and fower of the clock in the afternoone. We went on; but had not gone farre, but a new terror pursued us—the same soldiers came riding after us as fast as they could. Whereupon the King gave me a 'hem,' and I slacked my pace till they were come up to mee; and by that tyme the soldiers were come, whoe rudely passed by us, (beeing in a narrow lane,) soe that we could hardly keep our saddles for them, but passed by, without any further hurt; being some thirty or forty in number.

"When we were come to Beeding, a little

village where I had provided treatment for the King, (one Mr. Bagshall's house,) hee was earnest that his Majestie should stay there awhyle till he had viewed the coast: but my Lord Willmot would by noe meanes, for fear of those soldiers, but carried the King out of the road I know not whither.—Soe we parted—they where they thought safest; I, to Brightlemston, beeing agreed they should send to mee when fixed anywhere and ready.

"Being come to the said Brightlemston, I found all clear there; and the inne (the George).. free from all strangers att that tyme. Having taken the best roome in the house and bespoken my supper, as I was entertaining myself with a glass of wine, the King, not finding accommodation elsewhere, was come to the inne. Then up comes mine hoast, (one Smith by name,) 'More guests,' saith he.

"He brought them into another roome, I taking no notice. It was not long, before drawing towards the King's room, I heard the King's

voice, saying aloud to my Lord Willmott, 'Here, Mr. Barlowe, I drink to you.'

"'I know that name,' said I to my hoast, 'I pray enquire whether he were not a Major in the King's army;' which done he was found to bee the man I expected, and presently was invited, as was likely, to the fellowship of a glass of wine. From that I proceeded and made a motion to joyne companie, and because my chambre was largest, that they would make use of mine, which was accepted, and soe we became one companie again.

"At supper the King was cheerful, not shewing the least syne of feare or apprehension of any daunger, neyther then nor att any tyme during the whole course of this busines, which is noe small wonder, considering that the very thought of his ennemies, soe great, and soe many, soe diligent, and so much interested in his ruine, was enough, as long as he was within their reach, and as it were in the very middest of them, to have daunted the stoutest courage in

the worlde. As if God had opened his eyes, as he did Elisha's servant at his master's request, and he had seene a heavenly hoast round about him to guard him, which to *us* was invisible, whoe, therefore, though much encouraged by his undauntedness and the assurance of soe good and glorious a cause; yet were not without secret terrore, and thought every minute a month till we should see his sacred person out of their reach.

"Supper ended, the King stood his back against the fyre, leaning over a chaire, up comes mine hoast (upon some jealousie, I guess not any certain knowledge) but up comes him who called himself Gaius, runs to the King, catcheth his hand, and kissing it said, 'It shall not be said but I have kissed the best man's hand in England.' He had waited at table at supper where the boatemen alone sat with us, and were then present—whether he had feare, or heard any thing that could give him any occasion of suspicion, I knowe not. In very deede the King

had a hard taske, soe to carry himself, majestie being soe naturell unto him that even when hee said nothing, didd nothing, his very lookes (if a man observed) were enough to betray him. It was admirable to see the King (as though he had not been concerned in those wordes which might have sounded in the eares of another man as the sentence of death) turn about in silence without any alteration of countenance, or taking notice of what had been said.

"About a quarter of an hour after the King went into his chamber, where I followed him, and craved his pardon, with earnest protestation, that I was innocent, soe altogether ignorant of the cause how this had happened.

"'Peace, peace, Colonel,' said the King; 'the fellow knows mee, and I know him; he was one, (whether soe or not I knowe not, but soe the King thought att the tyme), that belonged to the back staires to my father—I hope he is an honest fellow.'

"After this I began to treate with the boat-

man (Tellersfield by name) asking him in what readiness he was. He answered he could not of that night, because for more securitie he had brought his vessell into a brooke, and the tyde had forsaken it, soe that it was on ground. It is observable that all the whyle this busines had beene in agitation to this very tyme, the wind had been contrarie. The King then opening the windowe tooke notice that the wind was turned, and told the master of the shipp; wherefore, because of the wind and a cleer night, I offered ten pounds more to the man to gett off that night; but that could not bee; however we agreed that he should take in his company that night, but it was a great busines we had in hand, and God would have us to know soe, both by the difficulties that offered themselves and by his help he afforded to remoove them.

"When we thought we had agreed, the boatman starts back and sayeth, 'No, unless I will ensure his barke:' argue it we did with him, how unreasonable it was, being so well paid; but

to no purpose, so at last I yielded, and two hundred pounds was his valuation, which was agreed upon. But then, as though resolved to frustrate all by unreasonable demands, he required my bond: att which, mooved with much indignation, I began to be as resolute as he, saying amongst other things, 'There were more boates to be had besydes his; if *he* would not, another should;' and made as though I would go to another. In this contest the King happily interposed, 'He saieth right,' said his Majestie; 'a gentleman's word, especially before witnesses, is as good as his bond.' At last the man's stomach came down, and carrie them he would, whatever became of it; and before he would be taken he would be run under water. Soe it was agreed that about twoe in the morning they should be aboard.

"The boateman in the mean tyme went to provide for necessaries, and I persuaded the King to take some rest; he did in his cloathes, and my Lord Wilmot with him, till towards twoe of the morning. Then I called them up, show-

ing how the tyme went by my watch. Horses being ledd by the back way towards the beech we came to the boate and found all ready; so I tooke my leave, craving his Majesties pardon if anything had happened through error, not want of will or loyaltie. How willingly I would have waited farther but for my family being many which would want me, and I hoped his Majestie would not, not doubting but in a very little tyme he should be where he would. My only request to his Majestie was that he would conceal his instruments wherein their preservation was soe much concerned. His Majestie promised noebody should knoe. I abided there, keeping the horses in a readiness in case anything unexpected had happened.

"At 8 of the clock I saw them on sayle; and it was the afternoone before they were out of syght. The wind (O Providence) held very good, till the next morning to ten of the clock brought them to a place in Normandie called Facham (Feschamp). They were no sooner

landed but the winde turned and a violent storme did arise, in soe much that the boateman was forced to cutte his cable, lost his anchor to save his boate, for which he required of mee eight pounds, and had it. The boate was back again by Friday to take her fraght."

As Mr. Parry, from whose work we extract this extremely interesting narrative, says, "it forms a link in the history of the escapes of Charles the Second, and falsifies in a remarkable degree the recorded and accepted histories of his Majesty's last escape. In Mr. Heneage Jesse's exceedingly able and valuable history of the Stuarts we have one incident at Brighton related as we have it here—touching the kissing of the King's hand; and some very curious and touching details as regard the King's position when on board the vessel, and the well-known jest of the smoker who puffed the fumes of the weed in the monarch's face: but *this* narrative seems to invalidate altogether the

truth of the historical part of the inscription on "Tattershall's" tombstone at Brighton, and moreover the claim of that person to such extraordinary praise for his courage and fidelity, inasmuch as Colonel Gounter in his narrative shows that he was an extortioner and a shuffler: and nobody shows that he had any notion it was the King till long after he had made his hard bargain with him and his friends; neither does the King appear to us, under all these circumstances; and having seen with his own eyes, as people say, (as if he could have seen with any other,) the dogged venality and imposition of the shipper, the King was justly liable to have the "boate" moored reproachfully under his nose at Whitehall. How as having been afterwards rated as a fifth rate in the navy, she got there, is not our business to inquire, but it certainly reminds us of a question asked by one of the greatest—ay, the greatest dramatic geniuses of this or any other country—who not understanding French, having been told

that Monsieur Tel had shot himself in his *bureau*, said, with an anxiety which pervaded her magnified countenance, "In his bureau! great heaven! how gat he there?" The perfect English scholar affixing to the word *bureau* no signification but that of the top of a chest of drawers.

Now Tettersell, as he is called on the tombstone, and his deeds are thus described thereon:

"P. M. S.

Captain Nicholas Tettersell, through whose prudence, valour, and loyalty, Charles II., King of England, after he had escaped the sword of his merciless rebels, and his forces received a fatal overthrow at Worcester, September 3, 1651, was faithfully preserved and conveyed to France, departed this life the 26th day of July 1674."

Upon this, and a long poetical epitaph so mutilated as to be read with great difficulty, we find a note appended to page 120, under the head "Sussex," in the 14th volume of the

"Beauties" of England and Wales," in these words:—

"It appears that Charles, after his defeat, wandered over the country, and at last found an asylum at the house of a Mr. Mansell, at Ovingdean, near Brighton. During his concealment there, his friends agreed with one Tattersell, who was master of a coal brig, to convey him across the channel. The night before his departure, he passed at the George Inn, West Street, (now known as the King Charles's Head,) kept by a man named Smith, who soon recognized his royal guest, but had too much loyalty to betray him. Next morning, Oct. 15, he embarked, and landed the same day at Fescamp, in Normandy, &c. &c."

Mr. Lee, in his History of Brighton, adopts this version, but Ovingdean is to the left of Rottingdean, and beyond Brighton. Now Colonel Gounter's valuable narrative puts it beyond doubt that Brighton was the terminus of the King's

journey, but—and here is the only possible chance of reconciling the contradiction—it is quite possible, that Lord Willmot did, when he left Colonel Gounter at Beeding, take the King with him out of the road, "he knew not whither," and carry him circuitously to Mr. Mansell's at Ovingdean, and so came back in the evening into Brighton from that village; but then, instead of finding an asylum at Mr. Mansell's for many days, as the statement implies, the period of his stay there could not have exceeded a few hours. Still the supposition that His Majesty was taken thither by Lord Willmot, is the only one, by which we can account for the statement, but which, if true, seems oddly enough omitted as a matter of history from Colonel Gounter's very minute detail.

Well! having brought this interesting digression to an end,—and exceedingly interesting it is,—*revenons à nos moutons*, (rather an appropriate summons to the South-downs,) and

look after a much less important personage than those of whom we have been treating,—our own Peregrine, who, we are sure, will not be ungrateful to us for investing with any new interest the field of his future performances, or peregrinations, in the love-making or rather match-making line.

CHAPTER VII.

PEREGRINE's journey to Brighton was a progress fuller of mystification than his last—although not his first—undertaking. He was off on a sort, if not of a wild-goose chase, at least of blindman's buff; and in the outset of the enterprise, not the least check to his ardour was the recollection of his departure from Minton's, and of the smiles of the spider-brushers from the laundry window; not to speak of the doubt as to which was to be the point of attack—the widow or the maid; nevertheless, his resolution having been taken, away he went.

That he was of a somewhat economical turn, we have already seen. So, calculating delibe-

rately upon his outlayings and "setting forth," and remembering that he was to be housed at one of the Brighton inns for the nights, he resolved to leave his servant on board wages in London, and betake himself alone in that best of all possible conveyances, "the Times" coach, —coach not to be more respected for its steadiness and well-regulated rapidity of motion, than esteemed for the beauty of sundry inside female passengers, who in his driving days patronized the appropriately named Goodman, as the ladies of other times encouraged Tom Tug—

> "The jolly young waterman,
> —— who ne'er was in want of a *fair*."

Away went Peregrine, and thus doubting, thus cogitating upon his prospects and proceedings, it was not until he had received the *accolade* from his friend Dumbledore on his threshold at Brighton, that he was fully aware of the precise nature of the temptation which had been held out to him matrimonially, being up to that

moment lost in doubt whether the lady or the daughter, who were staying with him, was *the* object: but one minute after his arrival served to satisfy him; inasmuch as the daughter made her appearance somewhat unexpectedly by half-slipping and half-tumbling down a precipitous flight of stairs, at the head of which was a door leading apparently to another suite of rooms, whence she emerged, and found her level on the mat in the hall (as the passage was called) at the bottom of them, exhibiting her small and delicate person to the least possible advantage, mystified by a sort of equivocal drapery, worn by donkey-riding misses at watering-places, and by their "Ma's" at picnics, &c., but which in ordinary society settles the question as regards the character of ladies, as decidedly as smoking a cigar in the street, or sitting with his elbow out of a carriage-window, concludes that of a gentleman.

Lucetta Mimminy, who thus presented herself in the first instance to Peregrine's attention in

so curious a manner, he felt assured could not be the "hinted at" prize; therefore Mama, with her jointure and the important interest in the fortune of her darling, at whose death, before her own, all the property to which she was the expectant heiress, was really and positively to return and revert, must be the "creature" to be specially attended to.

Peregrine had some odd prejudices about widows; but still he was not to be beaten off without a little probation, which would moreover involve a fortnight or three weeks' entertainment at Dumbledore's expense—bating the bed; nevertheless he was a little startled, because he had made up his mind to a wife, to be made for himself—a thing of his own training.

Dumbledore was perhaps one of the most unqualified blockheads that ever existed—

"Nonsense came *mended* from his tongue;"

His great delight was "quoting"—in what lan-

guage mattered not—for understanding none, he took sound for sense, and, generally speaking, no sense served him best; but he was good-natured, and in some points not very dissimilar from Minton; he was not a justice, and nobody would have taken him for a judge.

Mrs. Dumbledore was a sort of amateur appraiser, (or, as we see now over the doors of appraisers, &c. the term changed to "valuer;") she never mentioned anything without fixing a price upon it as if she were calculating for a deodand, so that, between the two, Peregrine might hope to gather some amusement, even supposing that the "widow" did not suit his book; not that she herself was without her merits in the way of character—speaking of character neither religiously, morally, nor socially, but as affording matter of observation for Peregrine, whose "Old Head" had somewhere about it the bumps of "observativeness," or some such word, which enabled him to form as just an estimate

of the mental qualities of others, as had been previously formed of his own.

Mrs. Mimminy was the young widow of an old gentleman, who departed this world some short time after the appearance in it of the dear Lucetta, whose rapid descent to the feet of her intended future father-in-law seemed to afford an ominous encouragement for his advances to her lady mother. Now, Mrs. Mimminy was what is called a timid woman—terrified at everything—afraid of the sea, of a river—of a frog—of a pig—of a blue-fly, and utterly unable to sleep alone since the death of Mr. Mimminy, who was far advanced in years when he undertook to marry her; and the prosperous state of whose pecuniary affairs had enabled him to settle upon her two thousand five hundred pounds a year—leaving her a capital house, wines, plate, carriages, horses, cows, asses, pictures, and all other imaginable things, during her life,—and somewhere about a hundred thou-

sand pounds in money—regular hard cash in the funds—to the young squalidity who, papered up in trousers, had made the slide down the "Montagnes Russes" of a Brighton house, which slide might have spared Peregrine a great deal of trouble and anxiety, if it had proved as serious as it probably would have done, had she not pitched upon her head.

"You've hurt yourself, dear," said Dumbledore, picking up the amalgamation of bread and butter.

"No," said poor Lucetta Mimminy, "not much hurt," and up stairs again she ran, certainly not at the same pace at which she came down.

"That, I presume, is the daughter of the handsome widow," said Peregrine to Dumbledore.

"Hit it—that's she," said Dumbledore,—"tumbly, bumbly, eh! my boy?"

This was funny—but Peregrine's eye was quick—as the memorable joke goes of that

excellent actor Wewitzer, who was in early life a contemporary of Garrick. Bannister, who was Garrick's pupil, said one day that such an eye as Davy's (as they called him) never was beheld—it could "pierce through a deal board." "That's no compliment," said Wewitzer; "for it must have been a gimlet eye." Peregrine's eye might have been sometimes a bore, but upon this occasion he felt a certain degree of repulse,—as we have just said a widow was not exactly what he wanted—but still—and how common it is in the world, that when one first arrives at any place, however subsequently pleasant, a man feels *gêné*, awkward, and ill at his ease, unless he be indeed a magnate who can do things that no minor man may—say things that no minor man dare say; smoke pipes in drawing-rooms, and make his host an object of ridicule to his own visitors. As Dollalolla, when she hears Glumdalca mention the fact, that of a hundred thousand giants who own her sway, "one hundred

of them are wedded to herself,"—exclaims, "O blest prerogative of giantism!" so may the ordinary creatures of the world exclaim, as to the blest prerogative of something which perhaps it would not be decorous to mention, but which gives the power to be perfectly at ease, without entirely leaving those who admire the power equally comfortable.

"Come, come, Peregrine," said Dumbledore, "close your peregrinations—that's not bad—come to Brighton, of course—dull before—our Sussex coast will be successful to you—never mind the sea-weeds—see weeds up stairs—the widow—charming woman—creature *per se*—don't *you* see?—I mean by the sea-side—that's it."

"I see it all," said Peregrine, "but where am I to be lodged?"

"Not Lodge's Peerage—not on the pier," said Dumbledore; "no—that's wrong—Old Ship—good place—snug bed—that's my way—but come up and see Mrs. D.——D by the side

of the sea—that's not so bad—I'm as droll as ever—never mind—you say 'Carpe diem'—carp's a fish as won't live—I don't care—come up and look at the ladies. Mrs. Mimminy is a sweet creature—quite worthy attention—sits looking at the ocean, thinking of her late husband—'stands all day like Dido with the window in her hand'—gerundic—don't speak. Di, do, dum—"

"But I am not fit to be presented."

"'Poëta nascitur, non fit'—that's it, eh?—you are no poet—not nasty—and quite fit—ha, ha, ha!"

"Really," said Peregrine, "I would rather go and change my dress, and—"

"No—don't be foolish," said Dumbledore, "make a shift with the shirt you have on—ha, ha, ha!—that's not bad—we dine at six—half-past five now."

"Then I had better go to my roost," said Peregrine, "and come back to dinner."

"Roost," said Dumbledore, "you may—you'll

find no perch there, eh?—don't be later, or you'll lose your sole—that's the way I go on—just as usual—ha, ha, ha!"

"I will be punctual," said Peregrine.

"Do," said Dumbledore. "Punctuality is by no means a 'sine qua non,'—it must be attended to—consider the cook—there's the point—it's what I call in my way 'the nemo mortalium omnibus horis'—don't you see?"

And so Peregrine proceeded to the Old Ship, preceded by a wheelbarrow, on which was his luggage, much after the fashion of the *long*-lamented Lord Lovat, whose trunk was carried away before his head. And what an excellent bit of *naïveté* was that of the landlady at Nottingham, where the hoary rebel was refreshed on his journey to London, on his way to be tried. The Lord, who was of gigantic stature, in going into the hostelry, struck his forehead against the top of the doorway. Stung by the sharpness of the blow, he uttered an oath,

unseemly in these polished days, and fulminated his anger against the lowness of the entrance.

"Don't swear, my Lord," said the landlady; "the lowness of *my* door will never offend you again—when you next travel down this road to Scotland, your Lordship will be a head shorter."

If Peregrine felt his ardour damped—at first by the peculiar circumstances of the case, it was more particularly subdued by the never-failing spirits and unquenchable absurdity of Dumbledore, whose perfect happiness, self-satisfaction, and inexhaustible mirth, were enough to drive an ordinary man into melancholy madness. Of course he as yet knew nothing of the widow; but hearing of her gentleness and timidity, it struck him that sentiment must be *her* line, and this feeling was strengthened by the history of her looking out of the window, and thinking of him whom she called, as Dumbledore told him while they were walking towards the Ship,

"her dear old Billy;" but then he knew that any attempt to be serious in the presence of Dumbledore would be unavailing. What he looked to financially, was the delicate appearance of Lucetta the child, impressed on his mind by the brief anatomical survey he had of her person upon what Mr. Dumbledore would no doubt have called "the stare-case," and while Peregrine was dressing, and before he had seen the principal, as the widow might be called, he began calculating upon the precarious health of the daughter—the practicability of insurances upon her life, and the assiduous attentions of a medical friend of his, a physician in small practice, who might probably, as he fancied, be induced to second his views, in taking away a creature so young and innocent,—

"——— from a world like this."

Brighton (where, if there *are* any trees, they never do—what naughty boys are told to do—turn over a new leaf) was just getting agree-

able when Peregrine arrived there; the fine figure-showing breezes were just setting in, coevally with a sort of snuggling sociability amongst those who have anything like sociability in them, and moreover a general acquaintance with those likely to be sociable; and when Peregrine, enveloped in his cloak, beat up stoutly against the south-west breeze in the dusk towards Dumbledore's house, he felt his energies awaken, his imagination expand, and.. was confident that, let Mrs. Mimminy be what she might, having what she had, he would win her.

He reached the house—knocked at the door —after some time it was opened—whack it went against the wall—the hall-lanthern swung like a monkey on a wire—bang went the dining-parlour door—smack went a glass door which was meant to break the force of the wind, but which was itself broken in the attempt—the stair-carpet heaved like the billows of the sea—and the portal whence Lucetta had suddenly eman-

cipated herself before dinner, flew open by the force of a draft from a small window beyond it. The servant at last contrived to shut what is called the street-door, the success of which effort involved the immediate extinction of our swinging friend, the lamp in the passage, and a loud cry was raised for somebody to illuminate the way which Peregrine was to follow—all these being the concomitant comforts of such mansions, to which ladies and gentlemen, with good houses and establishments of their own, betake themselves for health and pleasure.

At length, Peregrine reached the elastic floor of the drawing-room, upon which the gentlest pressure of the foot makes shakery all over the lower part of the house; for Dumbledore had neither, as we know, a mansion at Kemp Town, which, relatively to old Brighton, stands something in the same degree as does Hammersmith to Hyde Park Corner—nor in Brunswick Terrace—nor in—but stop, there must be a check in confidence of all kinds, when it is not mutual

—the locality must remain secret for the sake of the architect, if not of other parties concerned—suffice it to say, that the house faced the sea, as all houses at Brighton worth living in do; but it had been built before substantiality was considered essential to Brighton residences, and although Mr. Dumbledore's mansion was not a particularly solid one, he never could have said, with his mode of expression and turn of mind, that "it was no great shakes."—Quoting from the mental *vade mecum* of dear Dumbledore—our readers may perhaps explain to the unenlightened the true meaning of that quaint but to ourselves inexplicable phrase—and which never could have been applied to his Marina.

Peregrine was presented by Mrs. Dumbledore to Mrs. Mimminy, with a form and ceremony still observed in that blissful medium of society in which these worthies moved; and, as was her wont, the widow lost not a moment in exhibiting to the new visitor, her tender fears and delicate apprehensions.

"You did not come by the stage coach, Mr. Bumps?" said the Lady—so she called him in her trepidation.

"Bunce," said Dumbledore, "is my friend's name, Mrs. Mimminy. Bumps is, under the free-knowledgy system, English for brains."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Bunce," said the widow; who was, oh! so pretty—so nice, and white, and pink, with large bright blue grey eyes, and a charming figure, and a foot and ancle that would have made—whom we will not say, downright jealous—and so very *naïve* withal—as we have already heard.

"— But what a dreadful thing a stage coach must be—the horrid noise—the horses—and the whip—and the conversation—isn't it terrible?"

"No," said Peregrine, "I didn't find it so—I am a poor man;"—and he bowed somewhat significantly to the rich woman;—"if I could put four post horses to my carriage, I might like it better; but as it is, I think it a good mode of travelling."

"Oh, I am so timid," said Mrs. Mimminy, "—you would hardly believe it. One night my dear child Lucetta—don't poke, dear—Lucetta and I were sleeping—where was it, dear?"

"Do you mean, Ma, at the Blue ——?"

"No, no, my angel," interrupted the lady, "—at no Blue anything—at Salt Hill. We had been to see her cousin Ferdinand at Eton. Lucetta always sleeps, dear thing, in the same room with me—and a dreadful kind of animal—a sort of gnat, or something of that kind, got into the room, and I was obliged to ring for my maid, to get rid of it. The idea of being left alone in a room with a gnat would kill me!"

"Yes," said Lucetta, "and don't you remember when Major O'Callaghan used to dine with you, and I went to bed at nine o'clock, how terrified you were afterwards at a black beetle?"

"Yes, my dear," said Mrs. Mimminy, "Major

O'Callaghan is one of your trustees, and I am sure, after talking over business upon such subjects one naturally gets more nervous than before."

"Well," said Mrs. Dumbledore, "I am not in the least frightened at anything. I remember a maid I had—I gave her forty guineas a year, besides lots of dresses and all that—and some horrible insect, not worth a halfpenny in a museum, came in, burnt itself in one of the candles—best wax—when Muntingly, my maid, tried to kill it, and broke a glass that cost Mr. Dumbledore two and thirty pounds, without the frame, which he bought at Swaby's, and gave him eight guineas for it, besides four pounds ten, which it cost for new gilding."

Peregrine, whose acquaintance with Mrs. Dumbledore was but slight, was not slow in perceiving *her* peculiarity. That which he discovered in Mrs. Mimminy pleased him more—timidity was one of his favourite attributes of

the "female sex," and the form, and frame, and voice, and countenance, of the widow, seemed all to contribute to justify and render particularly interesting, her tender fears and delicate apprehensions; and by the time dinner was over, and the ladies had retired, the aspirant, whose susceptibility was unquestionable, had worked himself up into a belief that she was a very charming person; although, as he anticipated, all his efforts at sympathy, and an expressive community of feeling with her, had been completely marred by the perpetual jokes of his host, and the peals of laughter with which he naturally favoured them.

However, in the *tête-à-tête* with Dumbledore, which succeeded the departure of the fair ones from table, Peregrine was amply repaid for any little annoyances which he had previously met with; for the more his host explained of the character and property of the lady, the more his sudden prepossession became confirmed.

"Bless your heart," said Dumbledore; "she is a treasure—many a man has been courting her—don't you see, like Madam Blaise—

'The king himself has followed her,
Whene'er she went before.'

nice woman—so delicate; notice her foot—beautiful; only think of being step-father to little Lucy, with a foot like that—you'd soon get the length of it—eh?—Lucetta—thin—very thin—just like a needle—deuced sharp—with an eye and a point, don't you mind?"

"I mind nothing," said Peregrine, "only really now you are too bad; the things you said at dinner, society scarcely permits; the——"

"Eh?—what?—the Dublin tender,—I understand you, ha! ha! ha! they like it, if they understand it, and if they don't, it does no harm, ha! ha! ha! I saw you were vexed at my joke about the tumble of Lucetta, the that in præsenti and that, but, ha! ha! ha! poor little thing—a pair of compasses in calico.—not the Legs Taglionis, as I say—ha! ha! ha!"

"But now, really," said Peregrine, helping himself to a bumper of claret, the sight of which would have killed his Margy; "I do feel a deep interest in that widow."

"Ah!" said Dumbledore; "interest,—at what rate? I look to the principle. I declare if Mrs. Dumbledore was no more, and no more a Dumbledore, I should delight in being ditto to Mr. Mimminy,—respectable elderly gentleman —poor fellow he married—and died—and she,—with her sentimental turn, timid, and all that, laments him with decency, but,—I'm sure—eh? —pass the wine."

"Stop, my dear fellow," said Peregrine; "I never can get you to be serious, has she a mind?"

"Yes," said Dumbledore; "a strong mind: a great mind——"

"Has she?" said Peregrine, who had seen no very powerful evidence of her intellectuality.

"Yes, yes," said Dumbledore; "a great mind to be married again, ha! ha! ha!"

"But," said Peregrine; "you know her disposition and character—she is amiable, kind, and——"

"Find that out yourself," said Dumbledore; "as for person she is charming—eh?—fine bust—eh?—'Tityre tu patulæ,' and all that; as Virgil says—uncommon nice—thrown away upon old Billy, as she calls him,—never was a 'Billy do,' as the French have it—quite the reverse; not sweet, eh?—he was old, she was not,—there she is, quite a 'novus homo,'—beautiful prize, ha! ha! ha! ha!"

"But, my dear friend," said Peregrine; "you speak so loud; in these houses every thing can be heard; and even your recommendations, if they reached her ears, might injure my efforts to gain her affections."

"Not a bit, not a bit," said Dumbledore; "I think somehow that the young thing has been what I call put up to her own importance; Lucetta, or Lucy, as they call her; 'Clara Luce,' don't you see? light weight, do you comprehend?

and she has great power over her mother: she went to a school; but there they taught her everything but what she ought to have learned; so Ma means to have her all to herself, with a governess at home."

"A prudent proposition," said Peregrine: "however, we ought to join the ladies."

"Not a bit of it yet," said Dumbledore; "fill your glass—drink to the widow; and I'll add, may she not be one long: she deserves a good husband; she is one of those tender things that like ivy would trail on the ground all her life unless she had something to support her, and then she'd grow and flourish uncommon. Never think of ivy, without recollecting Jim Vinnicombe, an old friend of mine, in the soap line in the city, set up his carriage—didn't trouble the Heralds for arms, but clapt his cypher on his coach panels. 'Gad,' said one of his friends, 'why do you come out in an old coach?' 'Old?' says Vinny, (we always called him Vinny) 'it's a new coach.' 'Is it?' said his friend, 'why it's

green, and covered with I. V. all over.' Ha! ha! ha! don't you see,—I. V.,—Ivy,—ha! ha! ha!——".

"Very droll, indeed," said Peregrine; "upon my word, Dumbledore, you sometimes remind me very much of my worthy Uncle. But,—if I could but get you for one minute to be serious."

"I never *am* serious," said Dumbledore; "never in what the French called the "*Tears* état.' Can't cry, any more than the man who didn't cry turnips when his father died——"

"I know," said Peregrine, determined not to hear the exceedingly old paradox.

"I dare say you do," said Dumbledore; "but you never heard my clever charades. Oh! I am a bit of a poet, if you did but know it; nothing stops me: just listen to my charades; never wrote but two—on the roots,—eh?—not square roots, as you'll see. Somebody called upon me to write charades, one upon a carrot, and the other upon a parsnip. What do you think I did? Quick as lightning—as

the telegraph at the rail-road that sends a message two hundred thousand miles in a minute, out I pulls my pencil, and writes this for 'carrot':—

'In triumphs my first is most commonly found,
In many old houses, my second:
My whole is long, spiral, red, tufted, and round,
And with beef very excellent reckoned.'

Ha! ha! ha!—don't you see,—car-rot,—but now for parsnip,—wasn't to be beat,—so at him again—

'My first for age hath great repute,
My second is a tailor;
My whole is like the other root,
Only a little paler.'

Ha! ha! ha!—don't you see,—par-snip,—not so bad for me—ha! ha! ha!"

Peregrine laughed,—whether *with* or *at* his host is a question to be decided by others,—but he laughed against the grain, as the saying goes, because his whole mind was fixed upon the widow.

"Really we ought to go up stairs," said Peregrine.

"They hâv'n't sent for us," said Dumbledore; "and my wife is angry if we go up before they send a message, from the Lords, as I call the ladies. I know who you are hankering after—the widow, the duck in weeds,—eh?—'Dux nobis opus est,'—that's it,—however, her weeds have diminished; she has reduced the sign of sorrow to a black ribband round her waist—eh?—

'Give me but what that riband bound,
Take all the rest the sun goes round.'

can't say sun—here—it's a daughter."

"That child looks ill," said Peregrine; (whose "wish was father to the thought") "seems consumptive."

"Her appetite is consumptive, as I know," said Dumbledore; "ha! ha! ha!"

"She appears sick," said Bunce.

"All the effect of bringing up," said Dumbledore; "ha! ha! ha! 'Si sick omnes,' ha! ha! ha!"

"And the whole of the fortune reverts to the

mother in case of her death," said Peregrine, filling another glass of claret, and looking sufficiently serious, as he hoped to bring Dumbledore to something like matter of fact.

"I have told you so already," said Dumbledore.

"An odd arrangement," said Peregrine.

"A very amiable one," said Dumbledore; "he secures his daughter's fortune, but if she dies, her mother is to have it; what can be better?—and the mother has another hold upon the child, the granting which is strikingly complimentary,—she must marry with her consent or not at all."

"Yes, but she is too young to think of marrying for years to come," said Peregrine.

"I don't know," said Dumbledore; "when they begin to think of it,—that's another affair,—but I remember a Major once marrying a minor, and——"

"Tea and coffee are ready, sir," said a servant, entering the room.

"We are coming," replied the interrupted joker; "non sine Te possum vivere."

"Yes, sir," said the servant—bowed—retired—and shut the door.

"Upon my life, Dumbledore," said Peregrine, "I am not a man at all likely to be knocked over at a blow,—not of a disposition to be killed by the *coup de soleil* of a pair of bright eyes, but I must say I never saw a more prepossessing person than this widow; she is very nice——"

"More nice than wise," said Dumbledore; "not that I mean it, only it's a sort of a joke; I have given you the opportunity, and if you can't spell it, and put it together, I can't help it; you'll have plenty of opportunities; my old woman don't walk; she takes her drive after luncheon; but Mrs. Mimminy likes what the newspapers genteelly call pedestrian exercise, only she is so dreadfully frightened at every animal except one, that she cannot trust herself without a man to take care of her,—you'll have plenty of oppor-

tunities of making your play, and I think you will suit."

To this dictum Peregrine silently and to himself satisfactorily assented; but in order to carry his point at as early a period as possible, he again pressed upon Dumbledore the absolute necessity of a "move" towards the regions in which the fairest daughters of Eve were congregated: to which proposition, Dumbledore, having concluded his "down stairs" libations with a glass of overpowering brown sherry, acceded, and accordingly they repaired to the drawing-room.

CHAPTER VIII.

PEREGRINE, when he joined the ladies, was received by Mrs. Dumbledore with one of those gentle reproaches which she meant to be complimentary, and Mrs. Mimminy contracted her ruby lips and rolled her large and sparkling eyes in a manner calculated to make him believe that his appearance had been anxiously expected. Lucetta stood by her mother's knee and looked at him with a fixed attention; for having been present during the whole period in which his merits personal and mental had been discussed by the senior ladies, she was anxious to test his qualities according to *her* judgment by *their* estimate. Whatever hereditary talent Miss

Mimminy might have derived from her father, it is certain that

"She had her mother's eyes,"

and as it appeared to Peregrine, a surprising proficiency (for her age) in the art of using them.

Peregrine, by way of making conversation till his host arrived, (for Dumbledore was a man with a cellaret and a key, and locked up the heels of to-day's bottles to serve for to-morrow's luncheon,) enquired whether the ladies had been out during the morning.

"Yes," said Mrs. Dumbledore; "Mrs. Mimminy, and I, and dear Lucetta, had a drive in our pony phaeton—a very nice little carriage,—Dumbledore got it, I think a bargain, a hundred and thirty guineas,—without the harness to be sure; and the horses—charming match—gentle as lambs—only a hundred and ten pounds the pair—exceedingly reasonable;—then our coachman is quite a duck in his way,—five and forty pounds, two liveries, and a great coat a year,—

can't be a better,—finds his own boots,—and is as fond of the animals as if they were his own."

"Oh but Mrs. Dumbledore," said Mrs. Mimminy; "you talk of those horses being quiet,—dear me, I thought I should have died to-day—one of them put up his ears like horns at the braying of that dreadful donkey, and the other whisked his tail and made a horrid noise,—I was very near jumping out, only Lucetta held me,—that dear child has the courage of a hero."

"I've no fear," said Mrs. Dumbledore; "I don't like accidents, because they are sure to cost something, but as for myself——"

"You are past all price," said Dumbledore, swaggering into the room; "what are you talking about?"

"Of my dreadful timidity," said the widow.

"Oh!" said Dumbledore; "there it is,—it's constitutional,—it's your nature to be afraid, '*feræ* naturæ,'—eh?"

"Exactly," said the lady; "I assure you, yesterday I was so terrified at my dear little

Bobby, the sweetest canary bird imaginable, that I thought I should have died,—what had happened I cannot imagine,—but I had ventured to give it a little bit of sugar with my fingers, inadvertently to be sure, but all at once it opened its beak dreadfully—like an eagle—and fluttered its wings in the most surprising way,—I dropped the sugar and flew to the bell, and rang for my maid, but, whatever it was, the agitation had quite subsided when she came, and the bird has been tranquil ever since; but the idea of being bitten by a mad canary bird!"

"Why you'd have gone whistling about the world all the rest of your life, Mrs. Mimminy," said Dumbledore; "an '*avis* au public,' as the French say."

"Do you remember my Cocky," said Mrs. Dumbledore; "a favourite parrot Mr. D. bought me,—gave nine guineas for it, besides three pounds fifteen for the cage,—he would talk, talk, from morning till night."

"Yes, 'semper paratus,' ha! ha! ha!" said Dumbledore; "well I must say that pets are

plagues; one gets fond of them and then they die; my notion is that a pet is a regular *sine qua non*,—there's no necessity for it at all.—What liqueur do you take after your coffee, Mrs. Mimminy, Curaçoa,—Maraschino,—and some remarkably old rum from my own estates in the West Indies,—made in my father's time,—turn every thing to account,—sugar first, rum afterwards,—two commodities from one stem,—as Virgil says, '*rum*que *cano*.'"

Mrs. Mimminy tremblingly took a minute sip of the Maraschino, and permitted Lucetta, who never took her eyes off Peregrine, to taste of the glass which she had sweetened.

Peregrine was not long in making up his mind as to the calibre of his companions. Dumbledore's absurdities, and inveterate perseverance in them, were, as he knew before, quite striking enough to be amusing; but Mrs. Dumbledore, who evidently was fully qualified for the degree of Doctor of L.S.D., and Mrs. Mimminy, were rather below his mark. Lucetta's extreme

youth put her altogether out of the question, but there were germs of grace and beauty about her person, and an intellectuality about the expression of her countenance, which struck Peregrine, perhaps the more forcibly, as the budding Venus seemed exceedingly prepossessed in his favour. If he could have shut her up for a few years to grow "unseen," he would have waited his time, but neither could he immure her after that fashion, nor, according to uncle Noll's doctrine, could he afford the procrastination; it was with Noll, as Dumbledore would have said, "*nunky* aut nunquam," so Peregrine entered into conversation with his host at the fire-place, whence he could command a full, perfect, and uninterrupted view of the widow.

"Well, we had a fine harvest, that's one thing," said Dumbledore; "nothing like that; give the people enough to eat, *cornu copia*, as I say, plenty of corn, and things will go well; all that speechifying of our great radical leader last week, will go for nothing if you can but fill their

stomachs,—he is a cunning chap, long-headed, quite the *Fox populi*, as I say; but I would advise the people not to be deceived by him, he's no friend of theirs: I'd have them treat him comme il *faut*,—as if he was an enemy."

"He is a good sort of man in private life," said Peregrine; "moral, religious——"

"Oh yes," said Dumbledore; "very religious,—always at prayers,—toujours *pray*, as the French have it."

"My dear love," said Mrs. Dumbledore; "do shut the other door, the wind is enough to blow one away."

"I'll do it, dear," said Dumbledore; "de *gustibus* non, I hate wind."

"See, Mr. D.," almost screamed the lady; "look how the lamp is swinging, recollect it cost eighteen guineas and a half."

"I do see," said Dumbledore, hastening to exclude the tempest; "hanging lamp; the *pendente lite*, as I call it, is not good in windy weather."

To give what might be called a *verbatim* report of the conversation of the evening would be to tire the reader, although it has often occurred to the writer that nothing would be more curious, or more incredible, than such a report of any conversation which occurs in ordinary good society. Swift's imaginary sketches of polite conversation, would unquestionably be beaten hollow by the reality; although the coarseness and indelicacy which characterize those, and so vividly bring to view the style and manners of the time at which they were written, are gone and vanished "quite entirely," the nonsense and absurdity still remain in the full vigour of their inanity. If all the common-places of Mrs. Dumbledore and Mrs. Mimminy; all the little *naïvetés* of Lucetta, (by far the most interesting); all the jumble of Dumbledore's eternal gabble, and all the gentle affirmative replies of Peregrine, during the first evening of his domestication, were set forth and set down, they would occupy half a volume; and yet in nine houses out of ten in Brighton, on the

same evening, the chances are, that one should have heard very little better; because, although the level upon which the words run may be higher in some circles than in others, the ideas are much upon an equality; the difference of position and circumstances gives them a different form of utterance; and to be sure, a more extensive knowledge of generally good society affords a greater interest to the subjects under discussion. Perhaps, however, upon the whole, persons who talk of the great world speculatively, and live upon their doubts and mistakes, believe the most incredible things, and wonder how people can say *that*, which they never uttered, and do *that*, which they have never thought of doing, are, in point of fact, happier than those who know the real truth, which never purely reaches the debaters of ordinary society.

There can be no doubt that the heat and excitement with which politics are discussed after dinner amongst such persons, well-educated, well-informed, wealthy, worthy, and honourable

people as they are, are extremely satisfactory to themselves; but it must be confessed, that happening sometimes to know a fact which we dare not state, but which affords us the knowledge that the ground upon which the party in which we are, are arguing till they are half black in their faces, does not exist; that the circumstances which they are discussing neither have occurred nor ever can occur; the appearance of the earnestness of some, the fervent asseverations of others as to their intimate knowledge of the subject; the figures which the debaters cut *is* somewhat ludicrous,—but then why deprive the Englishman of his liberty of speech?—he pays taxes willingly, that he may inveigh against them after dinner, —ministers are his property, he contributes to maintain them, and consequently feels that he has a right to abuse them, which he does, or defends them, as the case may be, with about as much *fond* for his arguments or knowledge of his subject as the gentleman possessed, who, meeting Mr. Pitt in the street one day, asked

him if there was any news in town, and to whom Mr. Pitt replied, "that he really couldn't say, for he hadn't seen the newspaper."

When it was considered time for Peregrine to take his departure, (which, however, was not until something very like supper on a tray had been perpetrated, and Dumbledore had refreshed himself with much spirituous liquor, judiciously diluted, and had delighted himself and Lucetta by spelling brandy in French, (O.D.V.) in three letters, and in English also in three, (B. R. and Y.) "his custom always in the afternoon;"—nor till he had induced his newly arrived guest to participate in his libations,) Dumbledore insisted on "marshalling him" the way he had to go, and seeing him in safety to the door of his caravansera. In vain did Peregrine remonstrate against taking him out at so late an hour—he was resolved—and they accordingly quitted the domicile of the Dumbledores together. Peregrine shook hands with Mrs. Dumbledore; Mrs. Mimminy timidly put

forth her delicate little hand to be shaken; and Lucetta drew her fingers across her lips as she looked up into Peregrine's face. Peregrine looked at *her*, feeling himself very much puzzled by the action she had used, but eventually resolved that she was too old to be kissed as a child. Whether *she* thought she was still privileged by youth to "a chaste salute," it is impossible to say; nor had it been yet possible for Peregrine to ascertain her exact standing in life. He therefore shook hands with *her;* and, like Bassanio—

"So they parted."

As soon as Dumbledore and his guest were on outside of the house, Dumbledore pulled out of his pocket a case of cigars, and a bit of *amadou*, by means of which he lighted one of his comforters, and offered another to Peregrine, who declined.

"Don't smoke?" said Dumbledore; "—odd *that*—healthy pleasure—by the sea-side nothing like the weed—smoke it—chew it too—mum to Mrs. D——, never have it in the house—no

tobacco near the women—as I say, 'Ne *quid nigh miss*'—eh?—out here it does one good—but I say, talking of weeds, what d'ye think of the widow?"

This *was* a question! and as it was quite clear to the prudent Peregrine that his friend had been imbibing more spirituous liquor than he had deemed it advisable to indulge himself with, in the presence of the ladies, he thought it was an exceedingly apt and fitting time to treat it cautiously and cleverly.

"I think," said Peregrine, "she is exceedingly handsome—apparently very good natured—rather nervous——"

"That's all finery," said Dumbledore, "—don't mind *that*. I think she is a hit—a palpable hit—why she can't be much turned of thirty—the girl, as she says, is not fifteen, and she married quite young. I forget exactly what is her age; don't think I ever heard; but I know she was quite of the pinafore and bread-and-butter school, when she became Mrs. Mimminy.

Mimminy's money, I suppose, turned the scale. Her father was in the army—there were six or seven of them—Mimminy was a cross old fellow, and I believe broke the girl's spirit—however, she is getting better of it."

"How long has he been dead?" said Peregrine.

"Somewhere about four or five years I think," answered Dumbledore.

"Well," said Peregrine, "she hasn't been in any very great hurry to marry again."

"No, no," said Dumbledore; "—I believe she has had lots of offers—no end to her money—personals and all that—dotes upon her daughter—sent her to school—odd fancy—got bad notions in her head—had her home again, going to have her taught under her own eye—best masters and a governess—better plan—*my* wife has vast power over her—great influence—capital match, Bunce, '*pari* passu,' as I say—for an enterprising man—and as for Mrs. D., rely upon her friendship.—Sally never changes

—what she was, she is; and what she is, she will be—'che, *Sara*, *Sara*,' as I say—Ha! ha! ha!"

"I don't think," said Peregrine, "that the girl looks very healthy—too intellectual."

"Why," said Dumbledore, "she is; but she is wonderfully improving in health. To be sure she presented herself to you in the first instance oddly; but she *is* clever—if she dies—then, you know what I told you."

"I see," said Peregrine; "however, I hope you don't think me mercenary enough to look to such contingencies."

"Fine creature as to mind," said Dumbledore; "very expressive eye,—eh?—'*Bows yew*' —as the archers say—all I mean to hint is, that I think the concern worth looking after—but it's getting late—oh! here we are—what! door shut? bless me!—later than I thought—never mind—here goes"—saying which, Dumbledore pulled lustily at the night-bell of the Ship.—"Only think—we have arrived—'post *tot*,'—too late for a

glass after my cigar—nobody answers. Pull again—eh?—I don't think it rung—no—'In *bello* quies,' as I say—ha! ha! ha!—not a bit of it—yes, yes; here comes somebody—so good bye—breakfast at nine—don't be late. I shall walk fast back,—the night's coldish, and standing here in the draught has given me what the French call 'a *shiver de freeze*.'—Ha! ha! ha!—Good bye—" and away went Dumbledore whistling one way, while the wind came whistling another; while Peregrine mounted to his room, full of thought and calculation—for, to say truth, Mrs. Mimminy was an exceedingly pretty person.

It may seem almost a work of supererogation to cast our thoughts retrospectively on Twigglesford; and yet, short as has been our acquaintance with the Mintons, they may have excited some little interest. Peregrine, while tossing and tumbling in his bed, listening to the heavy fall of the surf on the shore before his windows, and the grating drag of the slippery shingle struggling with the curling waves,

could not think of his present position without reflecting on *that* whence he had been so recently ejected. He could not shut his eyes to the conviction, that Dory and Margy were infinitely more agreeable people than Mrs. Mimminy; nor could he disguise from himself the superior advantages, looking at the world as *he* did, derivable from marrying a young unsophisticated creature, in opposition to putting up with a ready-formed mind, prejudices derived from a previous husband, and a child who, whatever her own intrinsic merits might be, was, in point of fact, the obstacle intervening between him, and that for which he meant to marry.

Poor Margy—we may as well tell the history—*had* run away with Joseph Grout: his piety and devotion had completely alienated her heart and feelings from the grosser sensualities of superior life, and they were married—but not by Mr. Slobberton Mawks, whose rapid departure from Twigglesford, although by a "curious coincidence"

it took place on the day of Margy's flight, was in no degree connected with the "untoward event," but was occasioned by some enquiries after him, made on account of certain juvenile indiscretions, a development of which would have rendered his stay at his cure something incurable: so, leaving his page and his pet behind, he retired from Twigglesford; not, however, without taking care that his debts, small as they were, in the place, should be satisfactorily settled; and was, at least up to the termination of the present narrative, never heard of again. Minton took the page into his service, and the sheep was turned out to grass. Nobody had the heart to kill it. Nobody had the courage to eat it. So great was the respect of the saintly part of the population for The Reverend Slobberton Mawks's ram.

It is probable that in the chapter of accidents, of which life is composed, we may fall in with Margy—perhaps Dory; but if *we* do, it will be much more for Peregrine's comfort if *he* do *not*. And yet, such is the force of habit, associa-

tion, and juxta-position, that Peregrine could not think of Twigglesford without a sigh of regret—it might have been accompanied with a blush of shame—but he burnt no light at night, and if he had burnt one, he was, like most of his fellow-creatures, the last to see his own faults.

Those who know at what an early hour the "watch-work," as it were, of Brighton, is in motion, must be sure that Peregrine could not have slept late or long. As for the incidental thumpings and bumpings of people at inns, who have neither nerves nor notions of civilization, who over your head, on either side of you, under you—it matters not in what direction—stump and bang about, and ring bells, cord up trunks, pull on boots, cough—whistle even, and make all manner of unseemly noises, at a time at which nobody who has not some most particular business ever thinks of moving, or being moved,—these one must compound for; but when at Brighton, in addition to all

these exceedingly agreeable characteristics of inn-living, one hears the screams and yells of men, women, and children selling fish, donkey-boys trotting their braying steeds, loaded with little health-getting bumpers in poke bonnets and trimmed trowsers—butchers' carts capering about—milk—prawns—matches—stay-laces—books, prints, and almanacks—all hawking abroad by seven o'clock, because it is so healthy to be up early—not to speak of the loud conversations of boatmen and fishermen, inter-talked with by their wives and their delighted little curly-headed babes—puffs of wind, showers of dust rattling against the windows, and the dash of the surf grating on one's ears; the hope of rest, after it has been determined by the bathers, bakers, butchers, nursery-maids, fly-men, and donkey-drivers, that it is time to be out and about, was in Peregrine's locality perfectly vain. So, being upon his favourite economical plan, "servant-less," he rang his bell, and forthwith prepared for uprising—perfectly certain that Dumbledore,

who was "at home," would breakfast at least an hour or two later than he proposed to do; so that he, Peregrine, might peregrinate Brighton for at least two hours and a half before the cravings of nature had a chance of being satisfied at his hospitable board.

However, his stroll, after making himself smart, was a little enlivened by meeting the pretty Lucetta returning with her maid from bathing. He stopped, and spoke to her; indeed, she ran towards him, and intercepted him. So, it being morning, and out in the open air, he made one of his dashes, and gave her a kiss; upon which the maid said, "La! Miss Lucetta!"

Whereupon Peregrine cast his eyes upon the maid—who smiled even unto laughing—and Peregrine began to think—

"Come, Miss, we must get home," said the maid; and so Lucetta obeyed, tripping along sylph-like, and looking back at Peregrine as she went her way.

Now there was something exceedingly odd in

this meeting, and the feelings it excited. Peregrine was much prepossessed in favour of this pretty girl; yet she it was who stood between him and his worldly views towards her mamma and her fortune; and as Peregrine, when he once started, always hastened to his conclusion, and was perfectly sure that the widow would be *his*—if he chose it—he could not but feel a curious interest about her daughter. She was, in his mind, destined to be *his* daughter-in-law; she would grow up into a charming companion for her mother, and then—and so he went on thinking till he found it agreeable to throw himself upon a bench on the esplanade, which had been benevolently placed there amongst others by some excellent person, whose contributions to public comfort demand the public thanks; and there he sat, and watched the waves rolling in, one over and after the other, all exactly alike, as those who care not for such things would think; but which a mind given to musing can watch for hours, and see a change and difference in every one.

That sea hath a mystic charm—a thousand thousand thoughts are mixed up in the one curling billow that falls. A man that is not moved by this ordinary work of nature, is not the man for me. Peregrine, with all his worldliness, was absorbed in his speculations on its beauties; nor was it till Mr. Dumbledore's blue-plush footman had hunted him out, and summoned him to breakfast, that he left the scene of his contemplations.

The routine of the ungraceful meal, at which the widow did not appear, having been gone through, Mrs. Dumbledore having detailed the exact price of the prawns and the whitings, the eggs, and all the Brighton etceteras, with a most laudable accuracy, the two "gentlemen" of the party took a stroll, proposing to return to luncheon, then to receive the commands of the ladies as to their subsequent proceedings for the day.

Peregrine's circle of acquaintance was somewhat small; and he was rather indebted to his companion's knowledge "by sight" for the catalogue *raisonné* which he gave of the bow-

ing promenaders with whom they mingled, his anecdotes connected with them being invariably mistakes; but whenever Peregrine was able to question or contradict any of his "undoubted histories," Dumbledore always referred him to his standing authority, The Morning Post—"Read it there, sir—must be true—sure of my fact—ex *Post* facto—ha! ha! ha!"

Dumbledore persisted in his early prejudices in favour of the Steyne, the recollections of which before it had been cut in half, were fresh in his memory, and every day took an hour's turn at *Steynography*, as he called his walk upon it; and it pleased him to point out the various places in which, when a boy, he had passed so many happy hours, to trace the site of old Marlborough House, to expatiate upon the amusements at Crawford's and Donaldson's—the glory of the races, with the Prince driving his team—and a thousand by-gone gaieties, for all of which society has now become infinitely too polished.

Peregrine listened, and apparently with inte-

rest, to the eloquence of his companion, for Peregrine was too well bred to seem indifferent or inattentive to conversation addressed to himself; but he heard not all that was said; the widow was in his mind—and in his eye—if not already in his heart; and the circumstance of her not coming to breakfast annoyed him, because if she had felt as *he* felt, she would not have missed the pleasure of an hour's "exchange of thought" and sentiment. He quite left out of his consideration the fact, that the widow was a good deal past thirty—in spite of Mr. Dumbledore's ordinary miscalculations as to her juvenility;—and that with *her* complexion she did not think it either pleasant or prudent to sit with her face opposite a large window opening on to the bright shining sea, over which window, there was neither veranda without, nor *medium* muslin curtain within.

At luncheon, with her bonnet and veil on, Mrs. Mimminy would no doubt be found feasting ravenously on a pair of prawns, picked with

the whitest of fingers, encircled by the prettiest set of rings, tributes of regard for one—affection for another—friendship for a third—and so on. Every ring she wore had a story connected with it; and she liked to have them noticed, because, although her diffidence wholly precluded the possibility of her saying anything on the subject, it gave her an opportunity of exercising her beautiful eyes, and blushing, which she did habitually, if spoken to—in a way to light up her countenance in the most captivating manner.

All this did happen, and Peregrine was exceedingly well pleased with his new acquaintance, who, as they became more intimate, began to express her dread of him—she was sure he was satirical—he looked so—but, she added, that her dear little Lucetta told her she was certain that Mr. Bunce was very good-natured, and *very* good looking, all of which intelligence conveyed in *her peculiar* tone and manner, very much encouraged the hopes of the aspirant.

"Mrs. Mimminy," said Dumbledore, "let me offer you some brawn—the first of the season, I'll be sworn—made at our place in Oxfordshire—'*Sus* per *coll*,' as I call it—ha! ha! ha! —we don't wait for winter."

Mrs. Mimminy refused.

"A bit of duck? '*Dux* nobis.'—Ha! ha!"

Another negative.

"You eat nothing, my dear lady," said the worthy host; "we shall have a long drive before dinner."

"How do you and Mr. Bunce go?" asked the lady of the house.

"In *your* chaise—'*chay* vous.'—Ha! ha! ha! Sarah," said Dumbledore, "you can take the britska, and we'll lead the way across the downs, where I love to hear the bleating of the sheep, the '*Ba relief*,' as I call it. Ha! ha! ha!"

Mrs. Dumbledore never paid the slightest attention to her husband's eccentricities. Mrs. Mimminy simpered, and Lucetta stared with astonishment at what she could by no possi-

bility comprehend. His indefatigability in his peculiar science of perversion, was remarkable; nothing escaped him. As Peregrine was gallantly handing Mrs. Mimminy into the britska, her Cinderella-like slipper caught his eye; she saw the effect it produced—so did Dumbledore; and when he got Peregrine into the pony-chaise, the first thing he did was to rally him upon the stare of admiration which he gave upon beholding the symmetrical foot of the beautiful widow. "I saw you," said Dumbledore; "sly dog! couldn't take your eyes from her shoe—what I call the 'Pars pro *to to*.'—Ha! ha! ha!"

It must be admitted that Peregrine would have much better enjoyed a different arrangement for the expedition; but the present regime was inevitable; for if Dumbledore had driven any body in the "chay vous," it must have been the widow, in which case Peregrine would have been left in the britska with Mrs. Dumbledore and Lucetta; but even *that* would

have been more agreeable than a *tête-à-tête* with his friend.

However, in this world one cannot have every thing his own way; and so to make the best of that, which was no very bad bargain after all, away went the party on their excursion, and at a certain pace too—at least if Mr. Dumbledore's quotation on their return was justified, who, when the carriage drew up to the door, nearly died of laughing, while he screamed out, "how hot the nags are, Sarah!—'Calor sedit *ossibus*,' as I say. Ha! ha! ha!"

CHAPTER IX.

UNCLE NOLL, whom we left in his cocked-hat-box of a parlour, was not likely to rest quite at his ease as to the Minton matter, without discovering, or at least endeavouring to discover, something more of the history of the dispersion of that valuable and self-valued family,—the disappearance of the gentle Margy, and the abdication—to call it by its mildest name—of Peregrine; but Uncle Noll, as has been before insinuated to the reader, was not altogether tethered to the confines of Minton's empire of Twigglesford. He made occasional excursions to London, was a regular attendant at his favourite club; and when the gout retired, and

his old friends were not compelled to judge "ex pede Herculem," the stout and jolly veteran was to be found at his post, laughing, and quaffing, and relating, or rather recording, old jokes, much to the disparagement of his younger associates, who, with their figured waistcoats, and pendent chains, exhibited their thread-paper bodies, and hour-glass waists, much to his diversion and admiration.

That Margaret Minton was married to Joseph Grout, Noll had ascertained within three days after his nephew's departure, and ascertained moreover, that the event was believed in the place to have been the result of something little short of a conspiracy, with which some of the parishioners believed Mr. Slobberton Mawks to be mixed up. How, Uncle Noll could not ascertain; although he felt satisfied himself, that Peregrine's original suspicions on the point were well founded. As far as we are concerned, as we have already stated, we believe he had not any share in the proceeding, nor any suspicion of its con-

sequences. No matter at present for *that*. The decided fact was, that Margaret had become Mrs. Grout, which, to a family disposed to make the best of a bad bargain, and to turn up their eyes, and say, "It's well it's no worse," was something. The Mintons, of course, paid no visit to old Oliver; and Oliver felt, after all that he had heard—and he had heard a good deal more than Peregrine had thought it necessary to tell him—not sorry to get to London, early as it was in the season.

As to what Minton's feelings or views, towards or with regard to his daughter and his hopeful son-in-law, were, Oliver Bunce did not remain long enough in the neighbourhood to ascertain. What Peregrine thought of his position, after he had been ten days at Brighton, the reader will best collect from the following letter, which he addressed to his uncle at the Tavistock Hotel, Covent Garden, whence the worthy old gentleman had written to him, apprizing him of his removal to London :—

"*Brighton, Nov.* —, 18—.

"My dear Uncle,

"As I wrote to you, informing you of my kind friend Dumbledore's invitation before I started, I expected a letter from you — but I must say, not from London, for to say truth, I thought the gout had made you a prisoner for some time. I am exceedingly glad to find that I was mistaken, and that you are out and about again.

"I am exceedingly happy here. Every body has his peculiarities, and Dumbledore has his— so has his wife hers; but these are mere nothings when the heart is in the right place, and certainly anything more kind or hospitable cannot exist than they both are.

"I surmise, by your account of the Mintons, and what you seem to think of the forgiveness of Margaret, that Miss Minton and Captain M'Larrup will soon be united—perhaps are so, before now. I am glad, upon the whole, that it *was* a break-up there, as far as I am concerned.

Mrs. Mimminy, who is *the* widow under consideration, is charming; the timidity which is the predominant feature of her character, is quite attaching—her daughter, although delicate, is an exceedingly promising child, if one may call a girl of fourteen and a half, (and they say she is no more,) considerably forward in figure and appearance, a child. I think sometimes I see a hectic flush on her cheek, and that perhaps her intellect—for she is amazingly clever—is likely to wear out the body. Nothing I should more regret; because, even if her mother did eventually justify my expectations as to her good opinion of me, I am sure, my dear uncle, you know enough of me, to be quite satisfied, that I should be too proud, and too happy, to fill the position of a father-in-law, with all kindness and affection.

"I have exerted the little influence which I may be supposed to have obtained over the bright-eyed widow in carrying one point, on which she did me the honour to consult me. She had at one time a notion of placing, or rather re-

placing, young Lucetta at a boarding-school.—I certainly think that plan a bad one—for, independently of inducing a vast number of idle and bad habits, speaking generally—I should be, supposing any thing should result seriously from our acquaintance, better pleased to have Lucetta domesticated with *us*. The *naïve* conversation of a young creature like her, is always a relief in domestic life; and, devoted as her mother is to her, and she to her mother, I am sure the arrangement would be most agreeable to all of us. In consequence of this opinion of mine, Mrs. Mimminy has made inquiries about a governess, with whom she has received the most excellent testimonials, and who is to be here next week.

"I know, my dear uncle, your advocacy of the 'pop' system, and your detestation of what you call the 'dilly dally, shilly shally' school of proceeding; but I cannot profit by your advice or your experience. Dumbledore, after dinner, flatters me that I am a favourite with the widow,

and in *his* way advises me—his council founded upon some old, and not exceedingly correct proverbs touching widowhood: to declare off hand—to fall at her feet and shew myself what he calls 'a *knee suitor* ultra,' the result of which would be, that I should win her, and wear her;—but I do not think I have yet arrived at the proper point. I know you will laugh at me.

"However, if matters go on, as they seem to be now progressing, it will not be long before I bring the affair to a conclusion. She is exceedingly sensitive, and very endearing; and if there are any little peculiarities in her character, I flatter myself I can correct them. I certainly had a prejudice as regards widows, but I think my new friend is an exception to the general rule; for although she seems to treasure the memory of the late Mr. Mimminy, she appears to do so rather as a matter of feeling than of taste.

"We are going to-morrow upon a little excursion along the coast, meaning to pass a day at

Eastbourne, and one or two days at Hastings; and nothing, I think, affords better opportunities of furthering a scheme like mine, than these detached expeditions: they always give one opportunities of losing the main body of friends, and making a *tête-à-tête* without any impropriety or occasion for remark. Therefore do not, my dear uncle, answer this, which I only send as a despatch of advice, until you hear from me again.

"I have, I think, every reason to congratulate myself upon the quite accidental circumstance of receiving Dumbledore's invitation exactly at the moment I did. I have escaped the snares of a pretending, assuming family: yes, my dear uncle, pretending and assuming in all its branches, and have fallen into a circle, the constitution of which seems calculated to ensure my future happiness.

"Believe me, my dearest uncle,

"Your affectionate nephew,

"PEREGRINE BUNCE."

Noll, when he received this announcement from his nephew, felt considerably pleased; for, as we have already ascertained, Noll was very desirous, not only of seeing him settled in the world before he shuffled off this mortal coil, but exceedingly anxious to contribute his share to the settlement. Whatever might have been the sly indiscretions—if slyness and indiscretion be compatible—of the elder gentleman; and that he had been somewhat lax, has already been more than insinuated—he was very particular in his views as regarded his nephew. There are several proverbs — English, Spanish, and French — not particularly delicate in their phraseology, which go to establish a propensity not only of mortals, but of evil spirits who shall be nameless, to add to a previous accumulation of wealth, and Oliver Bunce partook, in a strong and strange degree, of the diabolical inclination to which those proverbs refer. If, when he made his will, Peregrine were poor, poor he would leave him, or perhaps, to play upon the

words, would leave him nothing; but if Peregrine, by address or talent, or any thing except industry, which he had no mode of exerting, could secure a sum—a something considerable—something calculated to place him in the sphere in which his whimsical uncle thought he ought to move—then Noll would come down handsomely to make *that*, which was already good, better; and so render his favourite Peregrine really and truly—as far as money and money's worth go—a gentleman.

It is far beyond our power, or even inclination, to attempt to account for what are colloquially called the "crotchets" which men get into their heads:—that Oliver Bunce had resolved to do nothing for Peregrine, unless he did something for himself, is an unquestionable fact; and there we leave it, to see how the affair works.

"I think," said Mrs. Mimminy, as she was promenading in front of Brunswick Terrace, on the pavement, being dreadfully alarmed at the

idea of hitting her foot against a stone which might probably be found out of its due place in the gravel walk of the Esplanade—"I think you take an interest in me, and this dear little thing of mine,"—pointing to Lucetta, who was walking by her mother's side.

"Can you doubt it?" said Peregrine.

"Why I can't say," said Mrs. Mimminy; "but I have told you, I fancy you are so dreadfully satirical, that I hardly know when to think you are in earnest in your conversations with me."

"Whenever I praise your morals, charms, and accomplishments," said Peregrine, "I am serious."

"Well, I'm sure, Mr. Bunce," said Lucetta, "you *are* civil."

"There, my love!" said the widow, pushing young Crinoline forward, "walk on first a little —I want to ask Mr. Bunce his opinion of *you*."

"Then, Ma," said Lucetta, "if you won't

let me hear his opinion of *you*, it's rather too hard not to let me hear his opinion of *me*."

"Don't be rude, Lucetta," said Mrs. Mimminy; "you quite terrify me when you talk in that way. I am going to consult Mr. Bunce on a particular subject."

"Oh," said Lucetta, looking somewhat piqued at being snubbed before Bunce—"then I'll go in to luncheon;"—and suiting the word to the action, she marched herself off towards Dumbledore's house; Peregrine remarking, as she departed, that she appeared to have grown infinitely plumper than she was when he first arrived.

"I think," said Mrs. Mimminy, "as I was saying before that darling rude child interrupted us, that you do take an interest in us; and although terribly alarmed at you, still I feel that you would give your advice sincerely if I asked it. Recollect I am a widow—alone in the world with that girl—because, as for poor dear Billy's trustees, and all that, *they* are anything but

friends of mine. Now you know we have talked over amongst us the best mode of finishing Lucetta's education; and I have at last, and chiefly in consequence of what you have said, decided upon a governess—only that I am so dreadfully afraid of a young woman in that line, because, to be fitted for the situation, she must have been well educated, highly finished, and even if not well born, at least well bred. Well, then, you see, I cannot help feeling that the contrast between the early life and later pursuits of such a person must be most painful—constantly irksome, and even revolting—and, although I should not quite like to make Lucetta's governess my own companion, still it is repugnant to my feelings to do any thing, of any kind, however trifling, that could in the slightest degree tend to awaken the feelings which I have attempted to describe, in the mind of a young woman so situated."

"Your feelings are most amiable," said Peregrine.

"But I think," continued the lady, "I have heard of a person who would entirely suit. Oh, Mr. Bunce, Mr. Bunce, look at that dreadful horse-stinger, or whatever it is—look at its wings —and its tail—don't, for heaven's sake, let it come near me—it's a terrible thing."

Saying which, she crouched under Peregrine's shoulder, in a manner quite consonant with her apprehensions of the horrible dragon with which she fancied herself threatened, and of which she was infinitely more afraid than she would have been of a dragoon, but which inspired him with a Perseus-like feeling; and, humouring her timidity, while encouraging her resolution, he ventured to convert the cowering for protection into something particular, and returned the sinking weakness of apprehension with a pressure indicative of a more tender, if not equally timid feeling.

"You are quite safe," said Peregrine,—"quite safe with *me*."

"I feel I am," said Mrs. Mimminy, looking

on the ground with eyes bright as the stars, and which seemed endued with the power of perpetual motion,—"I am sure I am."

"You must be safe every where," said Peregrine; "the sentiments you have expressed towards the young lady whom you propose to engage as Lucetta's instructress, show the excellence of your heart."

"I am not bad at heart," said Mrs. Mimminy, leaning, as he thought, rather more heavily on Peregrine's arm than usual; "but, after all, a widow is a solitary being. To be sure, my child is all to me—but she will grow up and leave me; and—I tremble to think of what will happen."

"But," said Peregrine, gently drawing the hand that rested on his arm a little nearer to himself, and perhaps gently raising it towards the region of his heart,—"why remain a widow?"

"Oh," said the lady, "the dread I have of involving myself in new engagements. My dear

old Billy was so kind, and so gentle, and so good;—but then, if I were to think, which I never shall, I am sure, of marrying again, the idea of bringing into the family a harsh father-in-law for that dear Lucetta."

"Who could be harsh to a young woman growing into beauty, and with such a mind as her's will be?" said Peregrine.

"Young woman one can't call her," said the widow, somewhat peevishly, "she is forward of her age—and clever—certainly clever—with her father's mind."

"—— and her mother's eyes," said Peregrine.

"Oh, get away," replied the lady, gently pushing him from her, as if reproachfully.

—— If that was not the minute to "pop," as Uncle Noll would have said, what one ever could be? Peregrine saw his opportunity—and drawing the arm with which he had been repulsed, close to his side, and heaving a sigh, caused rather by doubt, and fear, and

agitation, as to the critical state of his siege, he whispered—

"My dearest woman!"——

What more he would have added, history has lost—inasmuch as, at the moment these words had passed his lips, a smart tap from the top of a walking-stick between his shoulders startled him: he turned round, and beheld the indefatigable Dumbledore, with Lucetta at his side, who had brought him in pursuit of Mamma and Bunce.

"Hit you 'plenum *backi*,' eh?"—said the wag.

"Not one of your most agreeable hits," said Peregrine—driven by the interruption into something like a passion—suddenly moderated, however, by a gentle pressure of Mrs. Mimminy's delicate hand, accompanied by a softly murmured, "never mind."

These words, taken in conjunction with her practical attentions, cheered him; he felt that all was going right; but he could not quite

define in his mind the feeling by which Miss Lucetta was actuated in bringing Dumbledore after them. Whether it was the anxiety of not having him for her father-in-law, or the desire to make him her mother's son-in-law—for as to the excusable statement of Mrs. Mimminy, that Lucy was but just turned fourteen, with all his reliance upon the lady's veracity, he had been for the last week perfectly convinced that she must have made some little mistake in her calculation, or rather in her recollection, of the period of the young lady's birth.

"Well, we have caught you," said Dumbledore.

Yes, thought Peregrine, and I wish you had stayed where you were.

"Luncheon's ready, Mrs. Mimminy," continued the hospitable man: but the lady leant heavily upon Peregrine's arm, for she had been frightened by the abruptness of Dumbledore's approach.

" I am not hungry," said the lady.

" Oh, come back, and have some luncheon," said Dumbledore,—" there's a glorious venison pasty, or, as I call it, a '*rege pio*,'—ha! ha! ha! —and a pleasing variety of other things—is'n't there, Lucetta?"

" Yes," said Lucetta—evidently excited *somehow*, with regard to Peregrine's protracted *tête-à-tête* with Ma.

" See the shrimpers," said Dumbledore,—" there they go—theirs are *net* profits,—ha! ha! ha!"

"'But, dear me," said Mrs. Mimminy, " does not such constant exposure to the water produce all sorts of colds? I should be terrified, if I was ordered to do that."

" Nothing—nothing, when you are used to it," said Dumbledore; " they don't wade far, '*ne* plus ultra,' as I say—not above the knee —ha! ha! ha!—and if they *do* get chilled, why their wives give them something comfortable

to cheer them when they get home—'ardens committere *posset*'—best thing in the world for a cold—ha! ha! ha!"

"Are you going to ride or drive after luncheon?" said Mrs. Mimminy to Dumbledore.

"Must, Ma'm, must do one or the other," said he; "if I don't take exercise after luncheon I go to sleep—eh?—'aut dormitabo aut *ridebo*,' —ha! ha! ha!"

"Because," said she, "I really am so terrified at those spirited horses of Mrs. Dumbledore's, that if you don't mind, I would rather walk."

Peregrine here ventured, not what might be called a "high pressure" movement upon her arm, but just that sort of indication of his anxiety, that she would reject the drive for the stroll, which she could not fail to understand.

When, after this move, Mrs. Mimminy added, in the most silvery tone,—"Lucetta, dear, you can go with Mrs. Dumbledore, if you like,"

—Peregrine was perfectly satisfied; and Lucetta was not.

"Look at that poor fellow," said Dumbledore, who was full of benevolence, "look at that poor 'needy knife-grinder.'—I see him every day—seems to get nothing—they call him 'Gan *pities*' in France—no wonder—how does he get his bread, poor '*bellus* homo,' as my friend the Field Marshal says—I can't make it out. Then those unhappy fellows, who drive the flies and cars, as they call 'em—the 'miserabile *carmen*,' as Virgil has it, how do they live out of the season? or the poor girls in the market—eh?—the 'prænomine *mollies*,'—sad world!—Well, never mind, Lucy, dear, if they don't choose to go to luncheon, *we* will—and they two may remain, as I call my sour cider in the country, *perry pathetic*.—Ha! ha! ha!—Leave 'em to themselves."

"Why," said the lady, "my head aches, and I think a walk will do me good—which way do you mean to go?"

"Any way; all one to us," said Dumbledore.

"What I meant was," said the lady, "that if you drove out in any direction in which we could meet *you* returning, it would be very nice to be taken up and carried home: and by that time the horses would have got quieter."

"Well," said Dumbledore, "then we'll drive on the London road to Patcham, and so on; and in returning, will wait with Lucy at the corner of the dairy. '*Dare Lucem*,'—ha! ha! ha!—you and Peregrine—'*quere* Peregrinum,' as I call him, can stroll round by the old Chalybeate, come down by the malt-houses, and catch us just as you are getting tired."

"Not of each other," said Lucetta, with a look which she *must* have meant Peregrine to see.

"Well, then, good bye; Mrs. D. must be waiting," said Dumbledore; "so Lucetta and I will be off. I see the carriage at the door."

"Now mind," said Mrs. Mimminy, "mind, Lucetta, that you put on a boa and shawl: I

am terrified at a chill—do take care of yourself, child."

"Yes, Ma," said Lucetta, "I'll take care of *myself*—take care of *yourself*, for I'm sure you have scarcely anything on."

"But then I am walking," said Mrs. Mimminy.

"Yes, I know *that!*" replied the daughter, with an emphasis which she meant Peregrine to understand,—and so the *parti carré* separated, and great were the results thereof, as the reader is destined at no great distance of time to discover.

Now it had happened, that the excursion along the coast which Peregrine had announced to his uncle as being about to take place, had "gone off," as people say, through Mrs. Dumbledore's great solicitude to ascertain the probable expense of the undertaking. Very much of the commissariat of the Dumbledore establishment was supplied from their own place in the country. The *materiel* for the housekeeper's room, consisting of preserves, pickles, and condiments, were all home-made. Their wine

came from their own cellars, even the butter, cream, poultry, and vegetables were domestic; in short, every thing was conducted upon the same principle as if they were in one of their own houses. Whereupon, considering, Mrs. Dumbledore argued, not unreasonably, that as sea was sea, as cliffs were cliffs, as shingle was shingle, and sand was sand, it would be about the silliest enterprise ever undertaken to make a tour, full of inconvenience and expense, perhaps with occasional inefficiency of accommodation, a suspicion of bad cooking, and an almost certainty of bad wine—for no earthly purpose but to have the advantage of looking at Beachy-head with a ricketty glass belonging to the hotel at East Bourne, on one side of it, instead of looking at it with a good glass of their own on the other side of it—dragging and grinding up and down hills one way, and down hills and up hills back again, for no possible reason as she could see—satisfied as she was, that the whole cost would fall upon Dumbledore, who in moving his visitors

would never think of permitting them to share in the charges of the excursion.

Leave we this mercenary theme. The pair of Dumbledores have eaten their luncheon, so has Lucetta—she has been to her dressing-room, given a fresh twist to her graceful curls—a slight refreshing wash to her bright eyes and glowing cheeks—settled her pretty figure to its best advantage—bitten her lips, just sufficiently to give them an enticing redness, and returned to the dining parlour, putting on her gloves—much too tight, but (being French,) "stretchable." A brown parasol was dangling on her arm, although it was mid November, and the prescribed boa was hanging over her shoulders.—Into the carriage they mount, the order is given to the coachman for his route—and away!

The inveterate resolution of Dumbledore to make himself an ass, nothing could stop; and even with his wife, who, as we have already observed, had the very lowest opinion of his drollery, and with Lucetta, who wondered what

upon earth his *jokes* meant, he could not avoid expressing his belief that a man whom he saw watching another man bringing something across the shingle from a French fishing-boat, was a custom-house officer. Neither of his companions cared whether he was, or was not; but Dumbledore swore that he was sure he *was* a custom-house officer.—"Aut *seizer*, aut nullus," said he—"ha! ha! ha!"

Now, as to laughing, Lucetta was not in a humour to laugh, even at anything which she might happen to comprehend—it was perfectly clear to *her*, that Peregrine had engaged her mother's affections, or if not her affections, at least had interested her much more than anybody in the shape of man, whom she remembered to have seen in the house, or with her. To be sure, it might be, that Lucetta's mind was opening to a quicker apprehension of such matters; and it might be, that something like jealousy—it is quite wonderful how early in life strong feelings take hold of female hearts and

mind—might have tended to make the girl pensive and thoughtful during the drive. She could not banish from her imagination the walk in progress at that very moment—she heard in her ears the voice of Peregrine as he was conversing with her mother, of whose weak points and little peculiarities, having lived with her as she had lived, since the departure from this transitory life of the late respected and respectable old Billy, her lamented father, she was quite quick enough to be fully aware; and Mrs. Dumbledore was kept in great agitation by seeing how thoughtlessly the dear girl let her boa hang over the britschka, regardless of the mud it might collect, being quite sure it could not have cost less than ten or fifteen guineas.

"But," said Peregrine to the widow, as she mounted the once rural road from Hove, "if you feel so deeply the isolated position in which you are placed, and I can easily comprehend and duly appreciate such a feeling, why not again take to yourself that aid and support which

you so justly consider essential to the comfort and even security of a young widow of your time of life, which thousands would be too proud and too happy to afford you?"

"That I doubt," said Mrs. Mimminy; "but, however, the feeling I have, and ever shall have, for my dear old Billy—it may sound unromantic, Mr. Bunce, to use that familiar appellation in mentioning my deceased partner; but it was *he* —he himself—who taught me to call him so; and I never can associate any other appellation with the recollection of his beloved form, now in heaven, but Billy—it may, and perhaps would, to coarse minds, and uncongenial dispositions, appear ludicrous—I can't help it."

"Oh," said Peregrine, drawing her near him —for during their walk, even as far as it had yet extended, he had established, in a great degree, "the freedom of the *press*," which, as the patriots say, (a principle upon which they never act,) "is like the air we breathe; if we have it not, we die:" and had discovered that

the lady did by no means object to his mode of pointing his moral or adorning his tale by that sort of practical emphasis—"Oh, conventional terms in families seem to me the land-marks of domestic happiness. I knew a couple, whose names were Merrington Delaville, who always called each other Daddledums; and the most serious pair I ever associated with familiarly, a Mr. and Mrs. Scramshaw, of Catterdale, in Cumberland, never addressed each other, but as 'Cocksey' and 'Popsy;'—these things are all matters of taste and feeling; but pray go on."

"Oh, how you sympathize with all my feelings," said the widow; "but now, Mr. Bunce,—I am so terrified—to tell you all about my dear Billy —you will not think me quite a fool?"

"——A fool!" interrupted Bunce—"no—I should think NOT!—pray go on—every word you utter adds new interest to this happy conversation."

"Do you know," said Mrs. Mimminy, "I have never mentioned this, even to Lucetta. I do

think I have seen dear Billy three or four times since his death."

"Indeed," said Peregrine. "It is quite possible, inasmuch as nothing is impossible to Providence, and the question of ghosts is one which has been mooted for some thousands of years, and has not been yet, nor perhaps ever will be, decided."

"He promised to come if he could," said Mrs. Mimminy,—"and I think—only don't laugh at me—I quite tremble at the confidence I am making."

"Laugh!" said Peregrine, indignantly, biting his lips though to prevent a burst.

"It was in an inn yard at Rochester," said Mrs. Mimminy, "I had got out of the carriage while they were changing the horses; Lucetta wanted some wine and water, and I am sure it *was* Billy—only never betray me—it was about two o'clock in the day—Ah! I'm sure it was he."

She cried—Peregrine pressed—

" Was the figure like the deceased?" said Peregrine, affecting the deepest solemnity.

" Oh no, no," said Mrs. Mimminy ; " it was not like *that*—I know I shall expose myself to your laughter—no ; he had, as I have told you, promised to come to me in any shape he could; well—now, pray Mr. Bunce, do not say anything about this—it was market-day at Rochester—and I saw him there in the shape of a large sheep—I never think of it without trembling—the poor animal, which had remarkably large horns, (I never shall forget it,) followed me from amongst the other sheep to the carriage-door—and you know a sheep seldom goes any where alone—I spoke to him—but that seemed to have no effect. I watched Lucetta—she took no notice whatever ; but as we drove off, he went baa ! quite loud ; and the sound thrilled through my heart."

This was what might be called a settler for Peregrine : here she was—his if he chose—the depth and extent of her sensibility were here

displayed, and encouraged by his sympathy and tender affection, she imparted to him her further belief that she had seen him again in a farm yard, near Cheltenham, in the shape of a turkey-cock. She subsequently gave Peregrine some reasons why she thought she might have been mistaken in *that* case; but she was perfectly convinced, that since *that* he had followed her about the streets for two years in the shape of a "pug dog," which she was sure to meet wherever she went.

"These feelings," said Peregrine, "even if bordering upon superstition, do honour to your heart, and the confidence you place in the expression of the anxious desire of the dear departed, to re-visit you, is most exemplary."

"These convictions," said the widow, "are what make me so timid. I have never till now, found anybody who would understand, or sympathize with me; what a delight it is when one feels sure, as I do now, of——"

Here she stopped—and burst into tears—*this*

was the moment—"to be or not to be,"—what could he do better? he knew Dumbledore would not have deceived him as to the property—the woman—*quoad* woman—was nice enough;—minds are minds—bodies are bodies—and then to be Lucetta's father-in-law; and then—and so—looking carefully about, (which is particularly essential in the purlieus of watering places, where every body has his telescope out,) he pressed her to his heart—kissed her lips—and said nothing.

She said nothing either; but when he had "marred the ruddiness," she again pressed his arm, and they proceeded towards the dairy, without speaking, for more than a minute. At the expiration of that time, Peregrine, who was resolved to know all, drew his hand across his forehead, and exclaimed, in the tone of a tragedy actor, and with about as much sincerity—"Then! I am the happiest man alive!"

Oh, how did his ears tingle for a rejoinder to this declaration, and what were the delights he

experienced when he felt a sort of dependent lean towards him on the part of his fair companion, followed by a sob, and these words—"And *I* the happiest woman!"

"Come," said Peregrine to himself, (at the sentiment ending with the certainty,) "the thing's done—nailed, and here I am "*settled at last*," and he would have more forcibly expressed his happiness, but they had just turned into the high road, and he had no opportunity of sealing the contract in his particular mode of performing that sort of ceremony.

Before placing Mrs. Mimminy and her betrothed in the carriage, which, according to prearrangement, was waiting with the Dumbledores and Lucetta at the appointed spot, it seems necessary to vindicate her intellectual reputation from any ill-natured attack touching her belief as to the extraordinary masquerade appearances of her dear old Billy, by referring upon undeniable authority to the unquestionable existence of similar ideas and opinions in minds avowedly

much stronger, and infinitely better cultivated than that of our poor widow [1].

Such fancies, which even to the "adoration of the whispering wind," are purely Pythagorean, are, as Mrs. Cornwall Baron Wilson justly says, "by the inconsiderate, and those who have no power of believing what they cannot comprehend, treated with a certain degree of ridicule; however, in a world *in* which, *of* which, and *about* which, everything is incomprehensible to the finite mind of man, there can be neither wit nor wisdom in sneering at what to us may seem an absurdity, but which, after all, gives evidence of tender feeling and unbroken affection."

As to Mrs. Mimminy, she certainly did not carry her adherence to the doctrines of her school to such a serious extent, as to inconvenience herself; for however much her sensibilities might have been awakened by the sight of the ram at

[1] Vide page 287, Vol. II. of the Memoirs of the late Duchess of St. Alban's, written by the talented Mrs. Cornwall Baron Wilson.

Rochester, and the cock turkey at Cheltenham, she abstained not from eating. *Dindon au truffes* and a *côtelette à la soubise* was her favourite dish.

Another very curious instance of a belief in such transmigrations, occurred at Metz, under the influence of the celebrated, or rather notorious count Cagliostro, of which M. Fleury gives the following version in his History of the French Stage:—

"M. Latour-Eccieu, who had amassed a considerable fortune in some of the colonies, married, on his return to France, a lady whom he had met with in a secluded country place, his choice being influenced by the maxim of Sganarelle:

'Epouser une sotte est pour n'être pas sot.'

But in his prudent calculations there was one little circumstance which M. Latour-Eccieu, like many other similarly wise gentlemen, lost sight of; namely, that though an ignorant novice may be very willing to keep the right path, yet

it is a hundred chances to one if she does not, on her introduction to the world, meet with somebody who will lead her into the wrong one. Thus it happened in the case here referred to: and the attentions paid her by an officer of the garrison became very particular.

"The husband grew suspicious, and his suspicions were confirmed by the whisperings of friends; which, added to some pecuniary disappointments, determined him to adopt a project which he had some time contemplated. This plan was to freight a vessel with merchandise, and to go abroad again on a mercantile speculation. 'If,' said he, 'my wife be guilty, I will leave her enough to live on, and I will depart alone. If she be innocent, I will take her with me, and make every exertion to secure to her a fate worthy of her fidelity.'

"Whilst settling his affairs with a view to this final departure, he had occasion to make several little journeys. On returning from the last of these progresses, he informed his wife

(who was exceedingly superstitious,) that whilst travelling he had been lucky enough to meet with Cagliostro;—that that celebrated man, who possessed the faculty of penetrating the inmost recesses of the human heart, had observed his depression of spirits, and had hinted to him the possibility of his wife's infidelity during his absence from home. The wife vehemently protested her innocence, and expressed her indignation at the suspicion. M. Latour-Eccieu soothed her by the assurance that he would never accuse her wrongfully. Cagliostro, he added, had furnished him with the means of infallibly arriving at the truth. So saying, he drew from his pocket a small phial, containing a coloured liquid. 'To-night,' said he, 'when we retire to rest, I have only to drink this magic potion. If my suspicions be well founded, you will find me to-morrow morning transformed into a cat.'

"'Into a cat!' exclaimed the wife.

"'Into a black tom cat!' exclaimed the husband.

"'Gracious heaven! . . . but surely you will never be so rash as to drink that horrid draught. . . . It would be tempting the judgment of heaven, which you know the Church forbids.'

"'But there are commands of the Church as well as prohibitions . . . and I wish to ascertain whether her commands have been observed,' said M. Eccieu. 'Besides, you may retaliate; for this potion answers equally well both wife and husband. If therefore I have ever broken my faith to you, you have only to drink this potion at night on going to bed, and next morning I shall find *you* metamorphosed into a cat!'

"'Me metamorphosed into a cat! . . . Do you imagine I would ever consent to drink your horrid potion? . . . A cat, indeed! . . . To catch mice, and cry 'Mew!' . . . . I shudder

at the very idea of it. . . . Now, never think of taking that stuff, my dear. . . . Let me persuade you to throw it away.'

"But the more the lady inveighed against the potion, the more firmly was the husband determined to follow out his plan; and accordingly that same night, when he retired to rest, he swallowed a good part of the mystic beverage. The lady tried to suppress her emotion; but notwithstanding her credulity, she felt a hope that the whole was merely a trick prompted by jealousy. She pretended to fall asleep; but every now and then curiosity forced her to stretch out her hand towards her husband, in order to ascertain whether the metamorphosis had commenced. M. Latour observed this; and distracted as he was by his fears and hopes, it was not without considerable satisfaction that he ascertained by her snoring that she had really fallen soundly asleep.

"About seven in the morning the lady awoke. All her recollections of the potion and the cat

seemed to be the effect of a dream. She yawned, rubbed her eyes, and then turning round, missed her husband. She called him, but received no answer. She became alarmed, and was about to rise, when she observed something moving in the bed. She turned down the bed-clothes, and to her horror beheld a large black cat! . . . It was her husband . . . her dear husband! . . . The fatal potion had wrought its destined effect, and her crime was discovered! . . . But in his present altered state, her unfortunate husband could not reproach her. She fell on her knees beside the cat, called him by the tenderest names, confessed her fault, and sued for pardon. The cat at length raised his head, and stared with apparent astonishment at the lady, who was hanging over him with suppliant hands. 'He will not recognize me,' she exclaimed. 'He despises me! . . . Alas! I well deserve this!' Meanwhile the husband, who was concealed in a closet, overheard every word uttered by his wife during this curious scene. He seized the

first opportunity of effecting his escape, and on quitting the house proceeded straight to the sea-port, where the ship was waiting which was destined to convey him abroad.

"The disconsolate wife now lavished all her affection on the cat. Her friends endeavoured in vain to convince her that she was the victim of delusion; but in vain. The inexplicable disappearance of her husband, the well-known power of Cagliostro, the phial, and the mystic potion—all convinced her of the terrible truth. In the hope of expiating her error, she resolved to devote her future existence wholly to her Black Tommy. As to the animal, he showed himself perfectly satisfied with a mistress who tended him with such affectionate solicitude. During the day his resting-place was an embroidered cushion, at the fire-side; and his dinner consisted of a pâté or some other dainty, cooked and served to him by the lady's own hands. The fair penitent interpreted every look, answered every mew of her favourite, and was

never more happy than when, at night, he vouchsafed to repose on the couch beside her.

"Such was the state of affairs for the space of six whole months. The lady was gradually beginning to reconcile herself to the metamorphosis; but unfortunately, the cat grew weary of his monotonous happiness, and sighed again to taste that liberty which he was wont to enjoy before he became the honoured representative of M. Latour-Eccieu. One fine spring morning he was discovered to be missing, and after an anxious and vigilant search he was at length discovered on the roof of a neighbouring house, holding gentle converse with an amiable *minette* of his acquaintance. It now became Madame Latour-Eccieu's task to pardon: but this *escapade* helped somehow or other to reconcile her to her own conscience, and to banish remorse. Indeed, report affirmed that she renewed her acquaintance with her old friend the officer; and if he did not altogether succeed in undeceiving her, it is nevertheless certain that the lady and

the cat became more and more indifferent to each other; mutually closing their eyes to each other's foibles, and thenceforward living on the easy terms of a Parisian husband and wife."

To return from this digression to our own more particular friends. Nothing could have been more inconvenient, as it happened, than what otherwise would have been the opportune meeting with Mr. Dumbledore, who, in order to prevent the possibility of Mrs. Mimminy's fatiguing herself, had driven up the road, at the corner of which they had pre-proposed to wait; a step which they took upon the suggestion of Miss Lucetta, who, for some reason best known to herself, but which might be guessed at by some of our youthful readers, thought the shorter the walk her mamma took with Mr. Peregrine Bunce the better; and therefore expressed to Mr. Dumbledore a great deal of filial anxiety about her mother's health, and her apprehensions — peculiar as it seemed to that particular occasion,—that she might catch a dreadful cold,

of which probability she had warned her before she left her to her companion, on her return to the house.

Nobody can, or perhaps it might be better said, everybody must, feel how dreadfully disagreeable it is for two persons, whose whole minds are engrossed with a subject of vital importance to both of them, who have five minutes before taken the deciding step of their lives, to be hoisted into a barouche, and buttoned up in it, with a matter-of-fact lady, a sharp-eyed young girl, deeply interested in their proceedings, and an inveterate talker and joker, "the happiest man alive," (as Peregrine had just before called *himself*,) whose incessant roll of words nothing could stop, and who, laughing himself at every turn, seemed disappointed, and even angry, if his companions did not sympathize in his merriment.

Peregrine felt that he looked *gené* — the widow's cheeks were really flushed—her eyes bore marks of tears—and moreover, they glanced

upon her affianced with an expression not lost upon Lucetta. Dumbledore was humming a tune, and his wife was wondering how much a couple of fowls fetched in the shops, thinking no more of anything else than their coach-horses; but Lucetta, who sat bodkin between the Dumbledores, threw the whole community into confusion, by exclaiming with an affected wriggle of her little body.

"Why, la! Ma! you have been crying."

"Hey?" said Dumbledore, "in the '*tears* état,' as I said yesterday."

"Crying, child?" said the widow, in a tone exceedingly different from that which she usually adopted, in addressing her daughter,—"how can you be such a fool?"

Lucetta was startled by the sharpness of the answer, and was very nearly in the "*tears* état" herself; nor did Peregrine very much admire a display of asperity, which he had not till then fancied congenial with the character and disposition of the lady.

"It's the wind," said Mr. Dumbledore, "the air is sharp, 'Libs, Notus. *Austere*,' as the book says.—"Ha! ha!"

This laugh rang harshly in Lucetta's ear, nor was Peregrine quite at his ease under the fire of a look which the excited girl fixed full upon his face. He played the eagle for a minute, but the sun was too bright; he owled away from it, and endeavoured to change the conversation by a remark less distinguished perhaps by its novelty than its obviousness, that it was wonderful to see how Brighton was increasing.

"Even here," said he, "where, a short time ago, there was nothing but fields, are streets, inhabited, paved, and lighted."

"Yes, true," said Dumbledore, "very right—as Virgil says, 'ubique *Pavor*,'—ha! ha! long streets, eh? all ramifications from the old town."

Hereabouts Mrs. Mimminy and Mrs. Dumbledore began a sort of whispering dialogue, car-

ried on in perfect security. The wind blew, the wheels rattled, and as they sat opposite to each other, they contrived to effect a conjunction of their poke bonnets, so intimate and complete, that ears, even as long as a Dumbledore's, could not catch a sound. As everybody, who is nobody, fancies that everybody else in the world is thinking of *him*—his affairs, his history, and his interests, so Peregrine Bunce felt assured that his beloved was recounting the history of their walk and its results to her calculating hostess, instead of which it was a confidential communication touching some incident which had occurred during the stroll, totally disconnected with the main interest of the *tête-à-tête*, and relating either to the coming untied of one of her shoes, or something else, which the conscious and sensitive lover—? conjured up into a development—somewhat premature, as he thought—of the *denouement* of their proceedings.

"Let's go to the play to-night," said Dumbledore, as they passed the theatre *en route*

to the west cliff, reminded of its existence by seeing the bills at its door; "we hav'n't been to the play since the night of the row."

"A riot?" said Peregrine, whose throat seemed parched, whose eyes were hot, and whose hands were cold, and who scarcely knew what he said.

"Yes," said Dumbledore, "some fellows had got a dog in the pit—'*Cur* in theatrum,' as the Field-marshal says, and would not part with it. I never heard such a noise—it was all very bad—an opera, with no singing; only 'Tribus *Cloros*' in the finale—came away after the first piece."

"Yes," said Mrs. Dumbledore, "and had a private box, which cost one pound eleven shillings and sixpence, besides a shilling for the play-bill."

"What's acted to-night?" said Lucetta.

"'Miss in her Teens,' and 'The Spoiled Child,'" said Mrs. Mimminy, in a tone meant to be severe.

"Oh," said Lucetta, colouring up, "I thought it was 'The Irish Widow,' or perhaps 'The Way to get Married.'"

Lucky was it that the carriage at that moment rattled up to Dumbledore's door;—the storm that had been brewing in the young heart of Miss Mimminy had broken,—the fire that had been smouldering had burst into flame—Lucetta's aversion from her mother's marriage was no longer a matter of doubt. Peregrine was quite alive to *that;* the moment he looked at the girl, when they got out of the carriage, it was equally evident that the mother and daughter equally well understood each other; but Peregrine, who had, as we know, a certain degree of personal vanity, was more than ever puzzled to ascertain the real cause of Lucetta's hostility upon the present occasion; that is to say, whether she objected generally to her mother's placing her under the control of a father-in-law, or whether her opposition was shown towards *him* peculiarly; that doubt being again subdivided

into another, whether she objected to him as a father-in-law, because she disliked him, or because she liked him more than would be consistent with her position and character as his step-daughter.

It seemed to Peregrine that he should find certain difficulties in his progress towards happiness; however, he had taken his line—and had declared "popped," as Nunky would have said; or as Dumbledore would have bleated, "exerted his '*Vox Pop*,'" and, as the proverb goes, "his bed was made;"—as to the concluding part of the adage which says, "and so he must lie in it;"—that did not appear quite so certain. In the confusion of his calculations it is undoubtedly the fact, that he began to think he had "missed his tip," and attributed Lucetta's irritability to her personal admiration of himself.—He was all unsettled; which, in the days when strong writing was admitted, would have been called "bedivelled;" and while rejoicing in his certain achievement of the

widow, became restless and miserable, because the success of *that* enterprize rendered equally certain the abandonment of the daughter.

In leaving the carriage, at the door of which Peregrine, who had leaped from his seat to be gallant—double gallant he seemed to want to be—Mrs. Dumbledore declined his arm, inasmuch as she was particularly assiduous in preserving from the contamination of the hinder wheel the ends of a scarf, which had cost seven pounds twelve shillings and sixpence, but the widow accepted it, and with a manner, and a look perfectly conclusive; the pressure which accompanied both, was practically eloquent. Peregrine having disposed of his lovely burthen, presented the vacated arm to Lucetta.

"No, I thank you," said the lively girl, "I am quite young enough to get out by myself; you had better go and take care of Mamma;" and so she bounded down the steps of the carriage—up the steps of the house—and so to her dressing room; perhaps to vent her rage in a

flood of tears, a not improbable consequence of the agitation under which for three quarters of an hour she had been suffering.

"Come," said Dumbledore to Peregrine, "let us go to Castle Square—these double posts are mighty convenient—let's go and see the mails come in, or as old Terence says, 'ut videamur *malo*,'—ha! ha! ha!—I'm all for exercise; as for my wife, she never walks—gad, she is like one of the women without legs—what d'ye call 'em, the Carryattitudes?—got too much upon her head to walk—do you know why her head reminds me of the Psalms?—Eh?"

"No," said Peregrine, not listening to the question.

"*Téte* and *Braidy*.—Ha! ha! ha!"

And having fired this shot, the indefatigable Dumbledore took his friend's arm, and away they walked.

CHAPTER X.

It may easily be imagined, that a timid, sensitive, superstitious being, like the fair and fragile Mrs. Mimminy, would be considerably overcome by the events which had recently occurred: she, as well as Peregrine, had taken a deciding and decided step. And when she reached her own room, the consideration of the rapidity with which she herself had "jumped to a conclusion," quite terrified her—still it was done; and therefore she began to re-number in her mind the reasons which had induced her to accept, or rather meet half way the offer, of Mr. Peregrine Bunce to be her true and

lawful husband; but it was strange enough to observe in all her considerations and re-considerations of the subject, the attainment of the hovering sanction of dear old Billy never once entered her head, neither did the baa of the sheep, nor the gobble of the turkey, nor even the bark of the pug, sound in her ears to warn or guide her in her course.

Lucetta alone seemed to her the obstacle to the completion of her design, and the fulfilment of her engagement—had the events of that morning occurred the day before, she might have ridded herself of one great difficulty by sending her daughter back to school—if not to the one whence she had been suddenly withdrawn, to another; but now, not only was Lucetta prepared for a different mode of discipline, but a young lady was actually engaged as governess, and would be at Brighton on the following Monday. This, however, might be managed, and matters arranged; but what was to be

her next step?—how should she communicate the state of affairs to Mrs. Dumbledore,—and how announce the fact to Lucetta,—although she felt conscious that the young lady was not quite without a suspicion of what was in progress.

Peregrine was equally puzzled as to *his* course; he felt it only right, as the widow was living under the care and protection, and in the house of the Dumbledores, to make his host acquainted with what had occurred during his walk with the lady.

Previously, however, to doing anything else in the business, the accepted lover determined to avail himself of the period which would elapse before dinner, to write to his uncle, reporting progress—if no more than progress that might be called, which was in fact carrying his point—the reader perhaps would not object to seeing his letter, as being calculated to afford a fair illustration of his character and principles:—

"*Brighton, Nov.* —, 18—.

"MY DEAR UNCLE,

"I cannot permit this evening's post to go out without announcing to you my complete success in the undertaking in which you know I have been engaged during my residence here. I have already described the gentle amiability of the fair widow's disposition, the innocent playfulness of her sweet daughter, and the doubting hope which I entertained that I might eventually interest her in my fate. What I prayed for has happened—she has accepted me—I am the happiest man alive—now, dear Uncle, do not reproach me with procrastination in '*popping*.'

"In affairs of this sort, especially situated as I am, something more than mere affection is necessary to happiness; and although I have so far followed your kind and prudent advice, as to not plighting my faith to a woman without any money, I have not yet ascertained with any degree of certainty, the amount of Mrs. Mimminy's fortune. In the world one generally

hears of ladies' wealth in the same way as of a man of war's strength, in a description of which you often see—the Grampus (or whatever it may be) pierced for eighty guns, and carries seventy-two—the lady, whose 'rating' amounts to fifty thousand pounds, generally 'carries' about five and twenty. However, I am satisfied with the worldly part of the match, and delighted with the bright-eyed contingency; and as to the jointure and personal property, with allowances, &c. for Lucetta, I think that Dumbledore's first 'hint' is tolerably near the mark.

"The favour I am at present going to ask of you, is, that if it does not greatly interfere with your present engagements, or is not likely seriously to inconvenience you, you would come down to us here. I will undertake to get you exceedingly comfortable rooms at the inn where I am lodged, and I am satisfied that you and my friend Dumbledore, between whom and yourself I often see a congeniality of character and disposition:—will make it out admirably to-

gether—you will see my intended. I am sure *she* will be pleased to see *you*, and it will give a sanction to my proceedings, which will be most particularly agreeable to me.

"If you could contrive to be down with us by dinner time on Monday, apprizing me previously of your intention, so that everything may be ready for your reception, it would be very delightful. I have hinted to Dumbledore my intention of proposing this to you, and he begs to add his request to mine; although he is still uninformed of the result of my three weeks' acquaintance with his fair guest. *Do* say yes, my dear Uncle. I am sure it will do you good—it will do me good—it will do my cause good—so, say Yes; and let me hear by return of post.

"Yours, affectionately,

"PEREGRINE BUNCE.

"*To Oliver Bunce, Esq.*

"*Tavistock Hotel,*

"*Covent Garden,*

"*London.*"

In this letter there is nothing apparent but a dutiful affection and respect on the part of the nephew towards his warm-hearted but eccentric relation; but more lies under the surface. Our friend Peregrine very rarely acted upon a single motive; and in the present instance his object was to get old Noll down to the scene of action, so that when the fitting season came, he should be on the spot, to declare, if necessary, what he meant to do for his hopeful relation, and how far meet the views of those whom, it was to be presumed, were interested on the part of Mrs. Mimminy.

Peregrine knew that Mrs. Mimminy was independent, as far as her own circumstances were concerned; but he had frequently heard of a certain Major O'Callaghan, who was spoken of in the character of *one* of Lucetta's trustees —the distinctive numeral more than implying that there were others; which, added to the instinctive dread he had of an Irish Major, instilled into his mind by the recollection of

Major M'Larrup and his key-bugle, at Twigglesford, made him exceedingly anxious to have somebody on "his side" with him when the business drew to a close.

The letter was despatched, and Peregrine proceeded with more than usual care to dress for dinner; and the reality of his feelings for once overcame the artificiality of his character: he was nervous and restless, and even apprehensive of the very silly figure he should cut in the presence of his betrothed; but he might have spared himself much of his embarrassment, for Mrs. Mimminy had herself developed the whole history to Mrs. Dumbledore, long before his arrival.

"And where," said Mrs. Dumbledore, "do you mean to have your wedding-clothes, and all *that*, made? I can recommend you an excellent milliner and dress-maker, whom I employ—fifteen per cent. cheaper than the common run, and five-and-forty under the mark of the foreigners."

"Of that," said Mrs. Mimminy, "I really have not yet thought: what affects me most, is the way in which I am to announce the event to my child, Lucetta. I am terrified to death, you know, at saying any thing to anybody; and I think I spoke crossly to her in the carriage to-day, and if she should feel that ——"

"That what?" said Mrs. Dumbledore. "I certainly never had a child—that's no fault of mine, you'll say; but if I had fifty, I should not care two pins for any remark or observation of theirs upon what I chose to do."

"No," said the widow; "but dear Lucetta—it is so exceedingly different—she is so quick, and so clever; and I feel—I really don't know, but I think I ought in the first instance, to have broken this matter to her."

"Broken?" said Mrs. Dumbledore; "why, what does it signify? she has *her* fortune: you have *your* jointure—she cannot be injured by your marrying the man: what *he* has I really cannot say—she is provided for, and amply; and

although you can keep her under control, seeing that your consent to her marrying is necessary, it is quite clear that *her* consent to your marrying is not."

"No," said Mrs. Mimminy, "that is quite true; but then she is so quick—so volatile—so ——Ah, you don't enter into my feelings—I am terrified."

"Well, I shouldn't be terrified," said Mrs. Dumbledore; "I should say to her so and so, and so is to be, and so *must* be, and so *shall* be."

"Yes," said Mrs. Mimminy; "but she has such a spirit—and I really don't know—I do think I have been rather hasty in my proceedings: you know, dear Mrs. Dumbledore, young as she is—and *you* know she is not quite so young as she looks—she ought to have been consulted—at least, she ought to have been the first person apprised of it."

"I don't think," said Mrs. Dumbledore, "that she stands in need of any particular communica-

tion on the subject: what I saw in the carriage to-day, as we were coming home, was the first thing that gave me a notion of what was really going on; but her manner to you, and yours to her, set me thinking; and just as I was reckoning up the difference between the liveryman's bill for our horses here and in London, and wondering why there should be any difference at all, it came into my head all at once, that there *was* something between you and Mr. D.'s friend."

"How strange!" said the widow; "and now do tell me, my dear good Mrs. Dumbledore, do you think I have acted rashly—imprudently? I am terrified to death."

"Why," said Mrs. Dumbledore, "I, of myself, know nothing of Mr. Bunce—he is a friend of Mr. D.'s, and a very agreeable person; his uncle is rich—at least so D. tells me; he is quite good looking enough for a man—and seems good-natured, which is best of all. I was looking at his pocket handkerchief one night last

week, which he left on the chair—real bandana—two pound the piece—without hemming; and I noticed his front—fine cambric—French;—studs real amethysts—four pound fifteen the set, I should say. I mean there's no sham about him—no Mosaic gold—no paste pins—no plating—all real."

"It isn't *that* I care about so much," said Mrs. Mimminy, "but it is the final settlement of such a connexion all at once, off-hand—that's what flurries me."

"Rely upon it," said Mrs. Dumbledore, "you have done no harm—a woman ought not to be left alone in the world; you have acted wisely; and now you have engaged this excellent governess for your girl, she will take her so far off your hands, that she will not interfere with your agreeable intercourse with your husband; and when you desire it, why, the society of this young person will serve to make a little variety; her musical talents will be exceedingly agreeable; and I think her a bargain—a perfect

bargain, at a hundred and ten pounds per annum, finding her own washing."

"Of course," said Mrs. Mimminy, "I never would think of having any but the best of governesses; and really the idea of the school where she was, and the porter and oysters in the bed room, and the painters and glaziers, and the dancing-master, and the lecturer—oh—I thought, when Lucetta told me of all that, I should have died; no, my dear Mrs. D., I think I did right in getting her away from that place, especially when they brought up—what do they call them dear?—the '*Jim nasties*,' taught by a corporal of grenadiers, six feet two without his shoes, with a switch cane in his hand."

"For which you used to pay one pound five shillings per quarter," said Mrs. Dumbledore; "no, no—rely upon it, you were right; and my belief is, if this Miss Atkins turns out what Lady Dulcibella Damtuff says she is, she will be really an acquisition."

"And then," said Mrs. Mimminy, "you do not think I have acted precipitately."

"Indeed, no," answered the lady; "I rather wondered at your waiting so long for a second husband; and as for Lucetta, she is now of an age to care nothing—especially in her independent circumstances—for the domination of a father-in-law, and, least of all, such a father-in-law as Mr. Bunce."

"No," said the widow, "that's what I think—*you* know that she is turned sixteen—small of her age—quick, clever, and I have no doubt by her manner to-day, by what she has learned at school, and by the kind attentions of her maid, perfectly aware that she is older than I make her out to be: I would, if I could, get rid of Page—but I am terrified to death at her; and dare not say a word, or find a fault."

"What do you give her a year?" said Mrs. Dumbledore.

"Thirty guineas," said Mrs. Mimminy.

"Finds her own tea and sugar, I suppose?" said Mrs. Dumbledore.

"No," answered the widow, "I believe not; I'm sure I cannot say—but I should say, no."

"Too much, my dear," said Mrs. Dumbledore—"too much—washing done at home?"

"No," said the widow.

"Well, then," concluded the lady of the house, "I would send her away—she is *rather* fine; and *I* think Lucetta is too fond of her. I hate to see servants made friends of—it never ends well; make them know their places, and they will keep them; but this Page seems more like a friend than a menial — besides, thirty guineas, with tea and sugar — mercy upon us!"

The dialogue was hereabouts interrupted by the entrance into the room of Lucetta—looking as pretty as girl could look; the flush given to her downy cheek by the cold air having been moderated, in a certain degree, by the care of Miss Page, under whose advice the dear young

thing had applied some popular cosmetic, "perfectly harmless, and greatly conducive to beauty:" her countenance seemed to beam with intelligence, and the little *brusquerie*, which had taken place, touching the play-bill—in the carriage—had left enough of its reminiscence on her mind, to give an increased intellectuality to its expression.

"I hope you don't feel tired, Ma, after your walk," said she to her mother—not in the tone which strangers might have expected—but then, there were no strangers present.

"No, dear," said Mrs. Mimminy.

This placid answer did not suit Miss Lucetta's notions at the moment.

"Isn't Mr. Bunce late, Ma?" said the young lady.

Mrs. Mimminy was saved the pain of taking upon herself the responsibility of a reply, by Mrs. Dumbledore, who, raising her glass to her eye, and looking at a long-legged French clock under a tall glass, which was wagging its pen-

dulum with a horrid measured—tick, tick—tick, tick—noise enough to drive a nervous man mad —pronounced that it yet wanted a quarter of an hour to dinner-time.

"Are you sure?" said Lucetta, whose anxiety about Peregrine's punctuality seemed considerably to exceed her mother's.

"Quite sure, my dear child," said Mrs. Dumbledore, (not observing that at the word "child" Lucetta drew herself up, and threw her head back, as much as to say, "Child, am I?")—"Quite sure—because Mr. Dumbledore gave forty-five guineas for the clock, without the glass-case, which was four pounds ten more, not including the rug upon which it stands, which was worked by Miss McUneasey, a maiden aunt of mine."

"I don't know," said Lucetta, "but it *seems* later;" and she walked to the window, and looked out with an air of watchfulness and wistfulness, which did not escape her mother's notice.

The timidity of the widow's nature kept her in a perpetual fever, because she had not apprized the girl, (to whom there can be no doubt she constantly deferred—probably from a consciousness of her eventual importance in society, although even *that* depended, in a certain degree, upon her own "will and power,") of the step she had taken.

That a young heiress's maid is almost as dangerous a contingency as a boarding-school education, nobody can for a moment doubt;—the subservient cringing of these dependents—the complete abandonment of everything like principle or propriety, in order to carry their points, and what they call "keep in" with the young lady, are most terribly undermining, especially if it happens, as was here the case, that a jointured mother is in existence. Page knew, and so did all the servants in the establishment, who were of a class qualified to associate together, that Bunce was what one of them called "after the widow." Page knew that the young

lady hated the idea of a father-in-law; and, moreover, was in possession of that secret which the reader never before has attained,—that Lucetta, who fancied her mother at thirty-four or so, a very venerable specimen of shattered humanity, had taken it into her head that Peregrine would make a much more suitable husband for herself,—this "great mystery," the young Crinoline had confided to Page; the result of which confidence was a calculation in Page's mind, which would be the more prudent and more profitable course for her to pursue—whether to encourage the hopes of the young lady, unknown to the elder one, or betray to the elder one the growing affections of the younger one.

Poor Lucetta, with all her precocity, was not a match for Page; and when she had confided to her, her certainty that Mr. Peregrine Bunce meant to be her father-in-law, and at the same time was apprised that Miss Atkins was to make her appearance on the following Monday as governess to the "child," it struck her that, in

order to secure her own footing in the administration, she ought to take some deciding step to check the rising propensities of her young mistress, as regarded the gentleman who was destined—as she herself thought—to be her pseudo-parent.

However, in due time, and punctual too, according to the dial of Mrs. Dumbledore's five-and-forty guinea clock, Mr. Peregrine Bunce arrived; he was announced, and made his appearance before Dumbledore, who was either superintending the drawing of his corks, or, for all we know, drawing them himself—had shown.

Peregrine approached the ladies—made his obeisances—shook hands with them—and with Lucetta—and if Mrs. Dumbledore had not known the whole story, she would not have noticed the reciprocated look of Bunce and the widow, which, although they conveyed a meaning, were not more remarkable than that which one continually sees exchanged between men

and women at great *fêtes*, who have been missing for a short time in dimly lighted groves or dusky conservatories, and who intimate as they seemed to have been earlier in the evening, return to the full blaze of the salon, or ball-room, by different doors, affecting to look perfectly unconscious of their mutual, although (if well managed) not simultaneous disappearance.

The arrival of Dumbledore put an end to all embarrassment; his noise and laughter, and his pinching Lucetta's taper waist, declaring that her figure, wasp-like as it was, was all natural—everything natural "'quicquid in *Luce* est,' as old Senna has it,"—got rid of anything like awkwardness, and they went to dinner, Peregrine still having the honour of escorting Mrs. Dumbledore down the ladder, who, during the descent, made sideways on account of her size, said to him, in a whisper, "*You* should have taken the widow to-day; you have won her—you should wear her."

Peregrine bowed, with a look at the lady, meaning, "Oh, you know, do you?" Lucetta, who followed, and being one of the little pitchers that have long ears, heard, and said to herself, "I know too."

"And so to *dinner* with what appetite we may!"

The course, or courses, as it may be, of this meal, went on much as usual—enlightened and enlivened by Dumbledore, who desired mashed potatoes (after his housekeeper's fashion) to be handed to Mrs. Mimminy, as "*mollia parata*, and pressed her himself to take what he called some of the "*Jellydi* fontes," *that* being a trembling portion of Curaçoa jelly; having moreover persuaded her to drink a glass of Hock—which she hated—by reminding her—which she did not quite comprehend—that the Field Marshal, as he called him, pronounces that the drinking "*Hock*, est vivere bis."

During all this turbulent monologue, the looks exchanged between the triumphant Peregrine

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